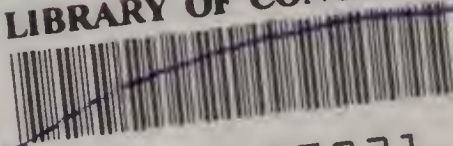


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Storehouse Tithing
OR
Stewardship Up-To-Date

BY
JAMES A. HENSEY



THE REVELL PRESS
NEW YORK

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Storehouse Tithing

OR

Stewardship Up-to-Date

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BY
James A. Hensey
JAMES A. HENSEY

Author of "The District Superintendent, Asset or Liability?" "Poverty and Preaching, the Truth About It." "The Itinerancy, Its Power and Peril." "The Layman in the Itinerancy." "The Church, Culmination and Transition."



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DEDICATION

To the Wesley Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, the Mother of Storehouse Tithing, which, when man's devices failed, took God at His word: "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse"; thereby not only perpetuating her own ministry but promising to lead the whole church back to the Divine plan, this book is affectionately dedicated.

INTRODUCTION

OF the making of books on the *theory* of stewardship there is no end. Of the making of any books on the *practice* of stewardship this book is the beginning. It enters an unoccupied field. *Why* this is so the author adequately explains. *That* it is so some have been painfully aware. The present storehouse movement has suffered seriously through lack of literature. Persistent inquiry has been met with the statement, "storehouse literature is yet to be created."

Strange to say, the oldest thing in the Church is the newest. Storehouse tithing is traceable to the very beginnings of organized religion in the earth and yet it is today the latest novelty. This prehistoric practice is generally greeted as though it were an audacious innovation, an unwelcome upstart among the institutions of the Church. It appears to have belonged to the lost arts.

Its chief hindrance is misunderstanding. After hearing the plan explained, a cultured Christian leader exclaimed, "I came to this meeting cold and hard. I had no use for the storehouse plan. All that I had ever heard deepened my hatred of it; but no sooner had I heard it explained, than it

was sold to me. 'The only trouble with this matter is that it is not understood.' Some of its chief apostles were once its bitterest persecutors. Not to know it is to hate it. To know it is to love it. It destroys its enemies by making them friends.

The main objections to the plan are aimed at its noblest features. What wonder, then, that its stoutest opponents often become its most enthusiastic advocates. Experience proves supposed inconveniences to be conveniences. Reluctant surrender becomes joyous devotion. Stubborn individualism yields to happy fellowship. Fragmentary efforts give way to co-operative enterprise. Systematic team-work, in the name of the church, takes the place of scattered promiscuous charities. The satisfaction of seeing one's church lifted to a new place of influence and power far exceeds "the thrill" of personal administration.

The above are but intimations of the experiences that transform enemies into friends of the storehouse plan. Like art-glass windows the appearance from without may be unattractive but from within transcendently beautiful. Actual demonstration is the sole need of the movement.

Macedonian calls from Kentucky, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Minnesota and Kansas within the past week indicate the rising tide of interest. A half dozen Episcopal Areas are seeking light concerning the plan. There is every indication that the attention of the whole

Protestant Church will presently be turned toward storehouse tithing.

It is therefore very timely that this book should make its appearance. The author is eminently qualified for the task. He was among the first to sense the significance of the present storehouse movement. As one of the superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church he has promoted it in the various types of churches comprising his district. For a series of years he has seen it thoroughly tested without being found wanting. As editor of *The Storehouse Advocate* he has convincingly marshalled the facts of experience. His frequent articles in *The Christian Advocate* have enlisted more than national attention. He writes not merely from natural aptitude but from actual experience and observation. Deepening conviction has led him to speak strongly. His conclusions have been reached in the laboratory of experience. His predictions are logical conclusions from such premises. He will seem radical only to those who have not lived in the storehouse atmosphere. His claims will appear exaggerated only to those not conversant with the facts. That the book will draw the fire of adverse criticism is neither unexpected nor undesirable—opposition being preferable to indifference. Those who come to this work to scoff may stay to pray. The demands of the book, like the cause it advocates, are eminently fair and reasonable. By neither are

afflictive requirements imposed on church or individual. Only blessings are offered to both. If the blessings of storehouse tithing are in disguise, they are none the less real. Like many another good cause, it is the friend of its opposers. The eager desire of its converts to *share* its blessings indicates its joyous experiences.

It is this generous impulse that has constrained the author to share the riches of the storehouse plan.

It is a highly esteemed privilege to introduce to the reader our mutual friends, the author and his book.

GEO. S. CONNELL.

Waverly, New York.
March, 1922.

PREFACE

THE author has long regretted that so much of the strength of his ministry had to go into the disagreeable task of coaxing reluctant Christians to support the church they loved but did not know how to finance.

It took him a generation of years to learn that the fault was with faulty methods and not with an indifferent, obstreperous, or impoverished constituency.

This book does not exploit a new remedy for an old evil, but an old solution for a *modern* evil. The Old Testament Church knew nothing of the financial embarrassments of the New Testament Church, nor was the latter church poor until it abandoned the only financial system (tithing) that God ever gave His Church in either dispensation.

Two requests are made of the reader:

Whether assenting or dissenting, pursue the argument to its conclusion.

Let your attitude be determined by the evidence, *and that alone*.

The author wishes to record his obligation to the associate pastors of the Waverly, N. Y., Methodist Episcopal Church, the Revs. George S.

and Frederick W. Connell, for suggestions in connection with the preparation and reading of the manuscript; to the Rev. Ralph S. Cushman, D.D., of Rochester, N. Y., to the Rev. Bruce E. Pierce, of Geneva, N. Y., to the Rev. Gervaise Roughton and William H. Roberts, of Cincinnati, Ohio, for valuable information.

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I

The Present Crisis

THE Christian Church is potentially the richest but actually the poorest organization in the world. Its material resources are unlimited, and unavailable. Its task is colossal, its reserve power inexhaustible, the truth of which it is the custodian indestructible, its financial possibilities adequate—and always beyond its reach.

The Christian Church is the poorest financed institution in the world. Its sense of obligation for the moral and spiritual welfare of the race is very keen. Its dreams for race service were never saner—and always its hands are tied because its resources are in purses it does not know how to open.

Its constituency is high in intelligence: rich in loyalty, having been pledged by the most sacred rights known to the race, but largely reduced to treadmill existence because it has neglected the *scriptural method of approach* to its financial problems.

We marvel that the Children of Israel should have wandered forty years in the desert with Caanan only a few miles distant, but the Christian Church has wandered *four hundred years* in the

wilderness of inadequate, man-made financial schemes when the rich meadows, verdant hillsides, and flowing streams of God's Caanan reposed between the lids of the Book it believed, *but did not understand*.

Though the residuary legatee of the world's best hope, the church has been reduced to the status of a mendicant, begging instead of dispensing alms.

It was the tragic blunder of Protestantism to abandon, and without the shadow of warrant, the Divinely given and never *repealed or modified* method of financing the kingdom of God on earth.

The results, easily foretold, have been similar to those which always follow the abandonment of the Divine plan: experimentation, dissatisfaction, insufficiency.

Who, acquainted with the present medley of schemes to finance the kingdom of God, will assert the sufficiency of any one or all of them? Some are puerile, others childish, while most are without the shadow of scriptural warrant, involving Christians in vast labor, pitiful disagreements, while always leaving a hiatus between what is needed and what can be gotten.

The ease with which the Christian church has reasoned itself out of the sense of *real responsibility* for its own financial shortcomings, is a curious commentary on human nature. God has never changed His mind, modified His law, or

given authority for hazardous experimentation. All that He ever said upon this important subject stands unrepealed on the pages of inspiration, yet *ignored with a frown or rejected by a gesture!* (And that by a church which bitterly arraigns the ancient church for its mental and moral obtuseness).

The church accepts the command, "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," and stands ready to obey—to the extent of its *available* resources. It passes the hat, the collection box, the subscription paper, or its solicitors go hurriedly from door to door one afternoon every three hundred and sixty-five days, accepting always such sums as the people may be willing to give. Each individual, *of course*, being judge and jury as to *what or whether he will give*, and that is the end of it, except as deficiencies are pieced out by methods which never look well in print!

It is all excessively casual, faint-hearted, unscriptural, and is *voluntariness run to seed*. While a delightful sense of irresponsibility pervades the congregation always sensitive about the mentioning of "mere" money. (It is so delightful to be unvexed by a fixed standard, and allowed to do just as one pleases, particularly in such a matter).

But how pathetic it all is. After centuries of waiting the doors of the world are open to the

preaching of the gospel, while heathen religions are being dissolved under the white light breaking from the pages of inspiration. Many Macedonian calls are heard: "come over and help us." Every denomination accepts a larger and larger program of service to nations in darkness; conducting vast educational campaigns among its own followers, culminating in emotional attempts to raise great sums by subscription, and then is subjected to the humiliation of being able to collect only seventy, sixty, or fifty per cent of the money pledged, while finally the stream which *promised so much dries away to dribblets*.

The church complains because Christians subscribe reluctantly and pay poorly. But it must be said that the constituency of the church is more sinned against than sinning. Even Christians do not know truth intuitively. When their leaders are either blind or silent (mayhap both), leaders and led stumble into the ditch together. Christian people are anxious to do the will of God, and discharge their full obligation to the world, but if they are not taught the will of God or how to meet its requirements who will be held responsible?

Until recent years the doctrine of Christian Stewardship had fallen into innocuous desuetude in the Church. Accepting an incidental reference to a benevolent collection for a persecuted church

by a visiting apostle, as the New Testament plan for financing the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the church has been led into perpetual poverty by the plan which proposes that every Christian shall give *exactly what he pleases, so long as he thinks he is giving in proportion to his means.*

Yes, we understand fully that that is not the end at which the plan so long in vogue aims. But, after participating in its operation for a generation, among hundreds of churches and tens of thousands of Christians, we do not hesitate to say that this is the only goal it ever has or ever can reach: *leaving every Christian free to give just what he pleases.*

Ever since the Christian Church was shunted onto this narrow gauge side track it has always been a beggar. So it must remain, unless it will abandon its man-made makeshifts and return to the *one revealed* broad gauge main track where will be found safety and sufficiency.

The present plan works as follows: it leaves each Christian free to

Give what he pleases;
When he pleases;
Where he pleases;
As he pleases;
If he pleases, and (particularly)
If he is pleased!

Recall how you have fixed the standard of your contributions to religion in the past. There

was no one standard applying impartially to all by which you determined the amount. You gave what you pleased, you paid it when you pleased, you put it where you pleased, that is, if you were pleased, and if not, you gave little or nothing.

Your church is enduring the annual agony of taking the budget. Circumspect solicitors go timidly from door to door. Each one gives what seems right in his own eyes. Great caution is used. Shy contributors must be delicately approached. Few suggestions dare be made, and no hesitation shown to accept the result, however inadequate. Any attempt to argue the question is resented as dictation. "Is not my money my own, and can I not give what I please?" "O, certainly," the abashed "beggar" hastens to say, and seeks to leave Mr. Owner (?) in the best possible mood, so that he will not sour on the whole institution.

Why is every treasury in the church, from the smallest up to the largest unit, usually faced with a deficit instead of a surplus? Because people give what they please.

Why must the church resort to fairs, suppers, questionable theatricals, wasting time and strength financing its actual necessities? Because its members have been recruited with the tacit understanding that they would be allowed to give what they pleased.

Why is there never enough money for the

one spiritual, fundamentally necessary kingdom among men, upon whose growth the race is more and more dependent? There is but one answer: the church, abandoning the Divine standard for supporting the kingdom, instructs each man to fix his own!

In other words, the church is poor *only because it has the poorest possible financial system*. And this is poor because it is man-made, not God given.

The constituency of the church is fabulously rich, probably the ablest group financially in human society. But riches, unless available, are useless. Unavailable riches are an exasperation, fostering dreams that cannot be realized. That has been the bitter experience of the church for the past century. It has known itself to be rich (that is, it knew that its members were rich; controlling, to a significant extent, the wealth of the world) and has been dimly conscious of the mighty works it should do, but forever held to the struggle for existence by a constituency which it has kept from the knowledge of the Divine plan for financing a Divine Kingdom. The resources of the church have been so meagerly marshalled because the church has overlaid the Divine plan with human experiments.

Does any other organization finance itself in this slip-shod way? (Slip-shod, we suppose, means smooth-shod on a steep or slippery road-

bed: an exact description of existing ill-starred attempts to finance the church.) When you ask for a ticket to New Orleans, San Francisco, Chicago, or New York City do you give the agent a "contribution" based, not upon what the road really needs, nor yet upon the character of the service to be rendered, but wholly upon your idea of what you can give? You would not think of dealing that way with a railroad, would you? Not if you wanted to get to one of these cities. Every locomotive in the United States would be "dead" in ten days, and every railroad between the Gulf and the great lakes, the Atlantic and the Pacific reduced to two streaks of rust in ninety days if its patrons were allowed to make "contributions" for services rendered. That is the *exact way we are trying to finance the largest and most important institution in human society!*

Would it not tickle your funny bone if the local Ladies' Aid Society of the Pennsylvania Railroad announced a Christmas Bazaar to help out the annual deficit; or, if the United Order of Knights and Ladies of the Golden Rail should hold a series of ice cream socials to help pay arrearages due the ticket agent and baggage smasher; or if, when the Chicago Limited got one third of the journey, the president of the company should "pass the hat" to buy coal to pull the "contributors" the rest of the way? (By that time the sensation would get farther into your anatomy

than the funny-bone.) We readily see the ridiculousness of that method when applied *anywhere except to the Christian church*. Is it because we think *anything is good enough for the church*? Or is it because, in a law controlled civilization, with exact weights, measures, and standards everywhere *we like to reserve one place where we can do exactly as we please!* If so, why pick on the church? Why not take something of lesser importance like the "movies," cigars, candies, or chewing gum? It would be all right to give them what we think they are worth or we can afford, but when it comes to the Church of the Eternal God we think *He ought to be allowed* to have something to say about it!

Now, if this voluntary principle, which we insist upon applying to the church, is so valuable why not pass it around, especially in these profiteering post-war days. If, in your judgment, the fixed price is more than you can pay, why not lay down just what you please, and, gathering up the goods, walk out of the store? That is precisely the way you have been doing with your church. It must take what you are willing to "give" or you will gather up your dolls and go home. Here is the one place where you will not be argued with, "dictated" to, or even allow the matter to be discussed—except in a tentative and feeble way. Maybe it is because you think the church does not amount to much, and it is an act of pure

(and unnecessary) benevolence on your part to help keep it alive! At least, one is tempted to think so.

But why not pass a good thing around? If this is the best plan for the church, why not let the butcher, the baker, and the candle-stick maker know about it? Surely, the church has no patent rights. Even if it has, they should be waived for the general good. The church might even collect a royalty for its use!

How long would the most prosperous grocery, dry goods, or furniture store last if their patrons, instead of paying prices, made "contributions" for the arm fulls and van loads they carried and carted away?

The Christians of America spend hundreds of millions of dollars every year upon various and unnecessary forms of amusement. When you step up to the enclosure and ask for several of the best seats in the house, do you push through a "contribution" based upon what *you think* you are able to give? Come now, is the theatre a more important institution than the Christian Church? If it is not why do you allow it to mulct you by an arbitrary standard, while you compel the church, the finest asset of American civilization, to accept a principle that would close up every "movie" and chewing gum factory in thirty days? Is that being square with God, with man, with the next generation?

The only ones who live upon the voluntary principle in society are its beggars and dependents, including the Christian Church. Every individual receives a wage based upon the service rendered, while every organization, commercial, or professional enterprise has fixed schedules of prices. But when the collection plate was coming down the aisle, you reached in your pocket and felt free to decide whether it should be a penny, a nickel, a dime, *or nothing*, did you not? And when the budget solicitors came the last time there was no other standard than your own judgment which determined what you gave. Maybe you asked what others were giving; how much the richest man in the church had given; whether there was a general tendency to increase or decrease, and then you gave as your fellow Christians were giving, with little or no consideration as to your real ability, the actual requirements of the budget, or the law of God! And yet men complain about the begging habits of the church, and the constant drumming for dollars!

If this is a true diagnosis of the method by which Christians determine *what* they will give to the church, and who acquainted with all the facts can question its accuracy, is it a matter for wonder that the church is always poor?

Again, the modern Christian not only arrogates the privilege of giving *what* he pleases, but pays it *when* he pleases. Every railroad in the world

not only has a definite schedule of prices, but the terms are always strictly cash. You can no more ride and pay *what* you please, than you can ride and pay when you please.

Every public service corporation serves its patrons on the time limit basis. No one is allowed to determine *what* he will pay or *when* he will pay. It is true, you do not have to pay—but the gas or electricity or water will be turned off at the end of the designated period if you do not, while the conductor of the trolley will gently (?) propel you to the exit if you insist upon your privilege to decide *what* and *when* you will pay!

The duplex envelope system, but recently introduced, has increased the volume and regularity of the church's support, but it can never be an adequate solution, for it still leaves the individual free to decide *what* he will give.

Every successful business in the world is run on a cash down, or cash in thirty or sixty days basis. If longer credit is desired, the price is automatically extended. Customers next door or on the other side of the world ask the terms and adjust themselves accordingly. *Only when we come to the church do the customers decide what they will pay and when they will pay!* And yet we wonder why the church, like Mephibosheth, is lame in both feet. It is a wonder that it has any feet at all!

Not only do modern Christians claim the right

to decide *what* and *when* they will give, but also *where* they will give. A former parishioner who had kept his membership in his boyhood home, used to say: "I cannot give much here because I have to give back there." But the folks "back there" said: "He has told us for years that he could not give much here because 'I have to support the church over there.' " Between "back there" and "over there" the church got nowhere.

How often are solicitors of the local church told: "O, this is not all I give for religion and benevolence. I believe in distributing it around." "Scattering" would be a better word. Why not say to your coal dealer: "It is an outrage for you to expect me to pay that big bill. I will have you know, sir, that I believe in distributing the money I set aside for coal. I have helped to keep many poor families supplied with coal this past winter, and some of my 'coal' money has gone there. You should not expect to get all of it." Just let us know when you are going to make that proposition to your coal dealer. We would like to be in the neighborhood at that time!

Yet Christians who would not think of allowing their debtors to settle on that basis insist on the church submitting to its practice. Until recently the organized church, with its far-flung battle lines, was allowed to be the almoner of a tithe of a tithe or one per cent of the total income of its

members. As the result of great "drives" the Protestant churches of America have advanced their giving to three or three and one-half per cent, *but only for the designated period of five years*. The churches are all atremble as to what will happen when that period has come to an end. That the present temporary standard of giving is considered excessive needs no proof, and is admitted as a distressing fact. When the Centenary, the New Era, the New World—the five year forward movements of the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Baptists have passed—will these denominations return once more to the low standards of former years? How can such a calamity be avoided as long as the church teaches its constituency to give *what, when, where, and as it pleases*?

II

Is There a Standard?

YES, emphatically. Is it thinkable that God would leave such an important matter as the support of His Kingdom, endless in duration and universal in extent, hanging in the air? Or do you think that He would speak unadvisedly, vaguely, or without due deliberation upon such a matter? Or that He would give His church an ill-conceived, inefficient, easy-going financial system that would forever leave it stalled on the wrong side of the ledger? If so, you believe in a God of limited intelligence. And yet the eagerness with which men argue for the abolition of the only plan which God ever gave for financing His church, and the skill with which they contend for an impossible substitute, is both interesting and alarming.

God is very definite about everything he wants man to be and do. No glossary is needed to understand the ten commandments, the moral conduct of man under both dispensations, or the fundamental beliefs upon which His kingdom in all ages was to be built. Is it possible that God, understanding the covetousness of the human heart and the difficulties that would be encount-

ered in financing His kingdom, would either give His church no financial system at all or only an inadequate one?

If the present plan, which permits every Christian to give what *he* thinks *he* is able to give, is Divine;

And if *this Divine plan* proves inadequate in practice;

It follows, therefore, that we believe in an *inadequate* God, worship an *inadequate* God, and are trying to build the Kingdom of an *inadequate* God!

Does it not?

On the other hand, we find that God has spoken promptly, clearly, and finally upon this subject. Obscurity here, *as is very generally the case, has its origin in man's unwillingness to accept the Divine decision*; his age-long propensity to say: "Yea, *hath* God said?" He has shown an endless tendency for modifying the Divine decisions; and, by subtle insinuations, lowering the Divine standards. He has developed an uncanny knack in explaining away the plainest statements of Jehovah; or, at least, in evading their application to his age, *and to him*. Artful dodging, is his long suit!

Out of remotest antiquity comes the principle of the tithe. It antedated the birth of the Mosaic code. Before Cain, Abel, Noah, Abram, Isaac, Jacob, it was. It was neither originated by nor

passed away with the Mosaic law. But the organization of the Jewish tribes into a nation, with a regulated worship, and an established priesthood, led Jehovah to systematize tithe paying, and apply it to the whole life of His church.

Israel was given three distinct tithes. Not polite requests or fervid appeals to generosity, but three definite tithes, whose payment was not optional with any or obligatory only upon the rich, but equally binding upon all, and to be evaded by none.

The first is stated in Leviticus xxvii, 30: "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's, and is holy unto the Lord." This tithe, while belonging to the Lord, was given to the children of Levi for services to be rendered: "Behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel to the Levites in return for the services which they served." No source of increase, whether of land or flock, was excluded from the payment of this tithe, while a tithe of this tithe was paid by the Levites for the support of the High Priest.

We see that Jehovah, systematic and thorough as we might expect Him to be, provided for the support of His first official ministry, not upon the basis of paying what they please, when they please, where they please, but upon the statement of a definite portion, to be paid at a designated place.

The second tithe is mentioned in Deuteronomy xiv, 22-27: "Thou shalt surely tithe all the increase of thy seed which cometh forth from the earth year by year, and thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose, that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always; and if the way be too long for thee so that thou art not able to carry it thou shalt turn it into money and bind up the money in thy hand, and thou shalt go into the place which the Lord shall choose and thou shalt bestow the money for whatsoever thy soul desireth, and thou shalt eat there before the Lord, and thou shalt rejoice there, and thy household, and the Levite that is within thy gates." This is known as the Festival Tithe: Twice each year the families of Israel went to Jerusalem to worship. This tithe provided sufficient for these occasions.

The first tithe *belonged* to Jehovah, and the *individual had nothing to say about its disposition*. The actual expenditure of the second tithe was left in his own hands, but it *had to be reserved for these religious pilgrimages*.

The third tithe is stated in Deuteronomy xiv, 28: "At the end of every three years thou shalt bring forth the tithe of all thine increase in the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: and the Levite, because he hath no portion, nor inheritance with thee, and the stranger, and the fatherless, shall come and eat and be satisfied that

the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou doest." This is known as the Poor Tithe.

We find that Jehovah provided three distinct tithes for three distinct purposes:

1. The adequate support of the priesthood.
2. Financing the national religious pilgrimages.
3. Proper support for the poor and unfortunate of the entire nation.

The principle of the tithe was brought out of the atmosphere of the occasional and *voluntary*, and written into the definite law of a settled nation. When the fullness of time came it was like everything that Jehovah did or does, thorough, and in principle, settled forever.

The subsequent history of Israel showed that God's blessings always accompanied the observance of *this* law, and that disobedience *always* meant disaster. In the days of Malachi national conditions were deplorable in the extreme, and the Prophet does not hesitate to charge actual and impending calamities upon the fact that Israel had become a nation of robbers: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings; ye are cursed with a curse; for ye robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith,

saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Israel was now far removed from the heroic days in which the law was given—when obedience seemed natural and easy. But neither distance, a growing attitude of indifference toward, nor even opposition to the law, *made the least particle of difference*: it still was God's law, binding upon the nation, and carried in its hand weal or woe to the people.

It is significant that there is no recorded complaint against the payment of these tithes by the people. They never appealed for the elimination of some of them or the reduction of all of them. This law was never modified, suspended, or repealed.

In addition to these legal tithes, a large place was made for free will offerings, and the record shows that Israel was generous beyond compare.

One of the most suggestive provisions in connection with the law of the tithe was the *place provided for the payment of the Lord's tithe*. Deuteronomy xii, 11, reads: "There shall be a place where the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices; *your tithes*, and the

heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord."

The thirty-second verse of this same chapter in Deuteronomy reads: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; *thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*"

These quotations teach clearly:

1. That there was a definite place for the payment of the Lord's tithe—all of it. Keeping it in a stocking, a tin box, or in the bank, or in one's own pocket, stable, farm, field, attic, or cellar was not to be tolerated. It was the Lord's, and it was to be paid to the Lord. Not a "limited" or a "modified" part, but the whole.

2. The place where it was to be paid was the place of worship (church) where God had caused "His name to dwell." They were not to individually administer the Lord's tithe, "scattering" it with a free hand wherever fancy dictated. It was the Lord's and the Lord, through His church was to administer what belonged to Him.

3. A solemn warning was added against tampering with the law. Dispositionally, humanity is not much improved over those ancient days. Man then, like man to-day, instinctively sought some way of "limiting" or "modifying" the Divine requirements. No doubt the prophets and priests had as much trouble to hold the people true to the law as the church of to-day has to bring them to a recognition of its existence.

In Malachi iii, 6, God says: "I am the Lord, *I change not.*" What He was He is; what He did He does; what He commanded He requires—"yesterday, to-day, and forever." Unless specifically repealed or modified, or outgrown by the higher civilization which His developing kingdom inevitably creates, *any law and every law given by the Eternal God is necessarily eternal.*

In Matthew v, 17, Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but fulfill." The figurative and symbolical portions of the law, that is, the sacrifices which were efficacious only because they prefigured The Sacrifice, met their perfect fulfillment in the death of Jesus Christ, and passed away; while all the rest, including the law of the Lord's Tithe, remains!

The Old Testament church was never put to the pitiful expedients that the New Testament church must adopt to make ends meet. God never rented the choicest pews to the rich, nor suggested the circulation of a subscription paper to find out what His people would "give" to support His church, nor directed an every-member canvass which allowed every one to say how much he would "give" to keep the church alive, nor yet suggested that the inevitable deficiencies produced by these methods should be met by oyster suppers, chicken pie dinners, ice cream socials, baked "stuff" sales, and grab bag gambols!

Can we for one moment imagine that such methods would originate with Him? The idea is preposterous. Since God was God He knew just what to do. And He did it at the right time, in the right way, and with that thoroughness quite characteristic of God. Indeed, would it not be better to say: "With that thoroughness *necessarily characteristic of God!*"

It remained for His church of a latter age—that age which was to witness unparalleled opportunities for the extension of His Kingdom, and which was, therefore, to be the neediest of all the ages of His church—to argue itself out of the Divine way of Kingdom support, while tying its hands with inefficient "modern" and "modified" methods that mean perpetual penury in the midst of plenty!

III

Has the Standard Been Changed?

PERHAPS the reader has come this far without disagreement. It does not seem that the positions assumed can be successfully disputed:

1. That the present methods of financing the church are inefficient, leading to endless embarrassment, and seriously curtailing the activities of organized Christianity throughout the world.

2. That God did solve this question once by accepting the principle of the tithe, and making it the fundamental principle by which His Kingdom was to be supported.

3. The principle and practice of tithing, once established, was never modified or repealed.

But all of that is in the Old Testament, some one hastens to say, while we are living in the light and "liberty" of the New Testament. Is that so? We have been under the impression that we were living under both Testaments. And that the First Testament, except those portions, types, and ceremonies that were fulfilled (filled full) by the life and death of Jesus Christ, or definitely repealed by Jesus Christ or His Apostles, is just as much inspired to us, and binding

upon us, as it was upon the conscience and practice of the Jews of three thousand years ago. We have not thought of the Bible as two Bibles, but one Bible; nor yet made up mostly of antiquated or repealed bits of once sacred literature, meaningless now to hundreds of millions of humans whose bosoms throb with the passions and problems of time and eternity. We have thought that in the Bible God had spoken once, and that that "once" was for "yesterday, to-day, and forever."

The closing of the Old Testament Canon meant that everything was intact, except the figures, symbols, and ceremonies that went with the anticipatory worship of the Jewish Temple. The blood shed by countless animals could wash away no sin except as it anticipated the supreme tragedy of the ages—the dying of the Only Begotten on Calvary's tree.

The New Testament does not contain one word, sentence, or paragraph, either from the lips of Jesus Christ, or the pen of any one of His biographers, or apostles that suggests, by the remotest implication, the repeal of the principle of the tithe.

If one syllable had ever dropped from the lips of Jesus against the principle or practice of tithing, would it not have been reflected in His recorded utterances? The tithe had been so long a part of the law, and had been so long practiced by the people, that Jesus and His disciples evidently took it for granted.

There is every reason for believing from His parentage, education, the community in which He was reared, the religious practices to which He had been accustomed from childhood, His own statements about His attitude toward the law, and the attitude of the Pharisees toward Him, that Jesus had been a strict observer of the laws of the nation to which He belonged. The Pharisees would have denounced Him instantly if He had neglected or refused to pay tithes. That they, who were the strictest tithe-payers in the world, and were, at the same time, His bitterest and most vigilant enemies, never did so, is proof that Jesus Christ met this requirement of the law.

But Jesus did make one clear reference to tithing, and *then He unhesitatingly commended it*. When He poured out His vials of wrath on the Pharisees He answered their excuse that they were tithers by saying: "These ought ye to have done." That is, tithe paying was an obligation resting equally upon all, and especially meritorious in none. To make it the excuse for injustice or moral uncleanness was reprehensible. Jesus laid on the lash with a heavy hand, but He was fair enough to commend the only thing in their lives really worth while—their tithe paying.

On this occasion, you will notice, our Lord was face to face with the question of the tithe. Now was the time to either commend or condemn it. If He did not expect this principle to survive in

the Kingdom in process of establishment, *this was the time for Him to say so*; if He had any other method in mind for financing the church of the new dispensation *this was the time to state it*; or, if He had not believed in the principle of the tithe, and had not Himself practiced it, *this was the time that He ought to have said it!* How was the crisis met? By the calm statement, in effect, that tithing was such *an ordinary duty, and so generally practiced, that it deserved no praise!*

Do you think that Jesus Christ was ignorant of the importance that future generations would attach to every word that fell from His lips. If not, did He speak unguardedly when He commended the tithe paying of the Pharisees?

It is true that Jesus did not formally re-enact the law of the tithe. But why should He? Tithing was not dead. He had grown up in the atmosphere of its practice. His parents were tithe payers, His sisters and brothers must have been, and how can we avoid the conclusion that He, also, must have met every requirement of the law in this, as well as in all other particulars. Why should He re-enact a law already in being, and everywhere practiced? He did not renew the Sabbath law. But why should He? His people had been practicing it for centuries. It would have been like telling them to drink water when thirsty, or to go to sleep when sleepy, or to eat when hungry! The Sabbath, the tithe, and the

rest of the commandments had been with them from the beginning. They were the commonplace facts of their religious life. Of course they expect to observe them. Evidently it had never entered the mind of Jesus that it was necessary for Him to commend the moral law. If it had not been for the question of the breathless young ruler who ran after Him, crying: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?" it is not probable that He would have said one word in commendation of that law. Would that have left us in perpetual controversy as to whether *that law* was obligatory under the new dispensation?

It is well to remember that there was no Christian church to finance during the lifetime of our Lord. The only organized church was the one into which He had been born, with which He had always affiliated, and from which He never withdrew. From the time of its origin this church had been supported by tithes and free will offerings. These had been adequate for every necessity. The system was written into the God given law of the nation, and incorporated into the fibre of the people by centuries of practice. It was never in dispute during the lifetime of our Lord. None argued against it, why therefore, should Jesus discuss it or defend it? But just as soon as the Pharisees sought to justify their less praiseworthy characteristics *by hiding behind their tithe*

paying, Jesus immediately said, in effect: "O, no, that cannot be allowed a single moment. No indulgence can be bought by the payment of tithes. For that is simply doing what we all ought to do." If this question touched us anywhere except in our pockets, would we not consider that our Lord's answer upon this historic occasion *bound the law of the tithe upon all our consciences?*

The law of the tithe repealed?

When?

Where?

By whom?

No devious circumlocution, please. No ambulatory gesticulations that will camouflage a direct answer. Everyone acquainted with the New Testament and with the history of the early church, knows:

1. That the only time Jesus Christ mentioned tithing He commended it.

2. That neither Jesus Christ, nor any of the disciples who were intimately associated with Him for three years, nor Paul, by implication or direct statement, ever repealed the law of the tithe or discouraged its practice.

3. That the earliest church was composed of disconnected groups of believers, former Jews and Gentiles, with limited means of inter-communication, with no regular ministry, and without a definitely organized movement to support. The few Apostles who travelled among

the feeble congregations were supported by free will offerings.

4. That as soon as system and organization began to appear in the early church, the principle of the tithe was taught and its practice inaugurated. The first Bishop of Lyons, who lived within a hundred years of the Apostles taught that we ought not to set aside less than a tenth for God. Does not this indicate that the practice must have been introduced into the church at an earlier day?

5. That just as the missionaries of to-day are introducing tithing into the non-Christian world, so the earliest missionaries introduced tithing into England. In the eighth century, at a national assembly summoned by King Ethelwulf, the tithe was formally extended to the whole of England. This "continued for seven hundred years, so that by the sixteenth century England, like all other parts of Christendom, had become a nation of tithe payers, every one being taught that God had the first claim of at least a tenth upon every Christian's income."

Some venturesome ecclesiastical mariner has discovered the New Testament standard of Kingdom support in First Corinthians xvi, 2: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

This text, cut off from its context and se-

quence, has been made to do serious disservice to the church of Jesus Christ!

Does it not show a curious state of mind when one text, wrenched out of its logical connections, is made responsible for the repeal of the ages-old and Divinely adopted method of Kingdom support, and its substitution by an *inferior and unauthorized one*?

Here, also, we see the danger lurking in the practice, now generally abandoned, of making *isolated* texts teach important doctrines. By separating this passage from its Apostolic introduction and conclusion, it is made to teach something entirely foreign to the mind that wrote it. (We presume that no one would be more surprised than the Apostle Paul, were he alive to-day, to see the lengths to which his reference to a *benevolent collection* had been stretched.)

First Corinthians xvi, 2 should not be detached from the preceding verse, which reads: "Now concerning the collection *for the saints*, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye." It is not a new financial system that the Apostle is introducing, but a few wise suggestions concerning a *benevolent collection for the persecuted saints at Jerusalem*. It is a wise principle of interpretation that it is dangerous to *evolve* that which is not *involved*. The evolution of a law repealing the tithe, and the introduction of a new and inadequate system for the support

of the church out of this direction for a benevolent collection *is totally unwarranted*. That was not the thought in the Apostolic mind, and no *one has the authority to read that meaning into his words*. (Theological vagaries are generally based upon the same dangerous method of reading a foreign meaning into isolated passages.)

In the third verse of this same chapter Paul says: "And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem." Official couriers were to carry this benevolent collection, accumulated during the intervening weeks, to Jerusalem. There it all ended, so far as we know. It was a temporary expedient—to *be practiced until Paul came*—for a temporary need. When the designated brethren departed for Jerusalem with the money which had been collected, *that was an end to this "system"*—so far as we have any evidence to the contrary.

Space alone prevents the recapitulation of the evidence showing that the Church Fathers, when faced with the task of providing means for the support of a growing kingdom, insisted upon the scripturalness of the tithe and that it was the uniform method by which the church was supported until the sixteenth century. God's method was then overthrown by the covetous and adulterous Henry VIII, of England, who married six wives, two of whom he murdered, two he di-

vorced, one died a natural death, while the sixth survived him.

Even Henry VIII did not abolish tithing, but alienated the tithes of the church to his courtiers and to replenish his private purse. The people of England are generally paying these tithes to-day, but not to the church.*

* See *The Sacred Tenth*, by the Rev. Henry Lansdell, D.D., published in England in 1906. Especially a booklet by the same author, *Back to the Tithe: A Pan-Anglican Echo*, privately printed in 1908, for illustrations of this statement.

IV

The Tithe in the Church of To-Day

THE passing centuries bring their inevitable changes in the thoughts, speech, beliefs, and habits of the race. It is a far cry from ancient Judaism, with its annual dual religious pilgrimages, to the hundreds of millions of believers scattered throughout the habitable globe. We are no longer commanded to appear, with our families, twice each year in Jerusalem for worship and fellowship. Events have superceded the necessity for the Festival Tithe, while the development of the eleemosynary institutions of society have logically superceded the Poor Tithe levied every three years. But the first tithe, known as the Lord's Tithe, has never been repealed, modified or outgrown because no longer necessary, or replaced by a newer and more efficient method of accomplishing the same end.

Rev. Richard Duke, in *The Christian Guardian*, Toronto, Canada, January 13th, 1904, puts this succinctly, as follows:

1. It is a principle in jurisprudence that when the reasons which originated a law continue to operate, and there is no explicit repeal of the law, the law remains in force. And this prin-

ciple appears to have the lucidity and force of an axiom.

2. That which passed away was the symbolical and figurative. Tithing was neither one nor the other, but a duty issuing from the moral law, which is of perpetual force.

3. True, there is no formal re-enactment of the tithe. But why should such a formal re-enactment be looked for? The law had not become obsolete; it was not indifferently observed. On the contrary, it was conspicuously honored in its observance. Similarly, there is no formal re-enactment of the Sabbath law; but Christians recognize the law respecting the seventh of time, and by a parity of reasoning should recognize the law respecting the tenth of substance.*

The tithe was established by Jehovah for the support of His ancient ministry, confined to a single small nation, occupying a limited area of the earth's surface. To-day His ministers are found wherever man lives, and are, by His direct command, carrying His gospel to every tribe, race, and nation. The demand for adequate resources are greater to-day than ever before. Where there were thousands of Levites there are tens of thousands of heralds of the truth; where there was one Temple to support there are hundreds of thousands of Christian Churches;

* Quoted from *The Sacred Tenth*—Lansdell. Vol. 1, page 172.

instead of a small nation with few very rich and few very poor, there are now needy millions around the globe; where there were no missions to the heathen, the planet is now dotted with them; where there was one small agricultural nation to hold true to the faith, there is now a vast world community with centralized industrial populations to be educated, evangelized, and held to the higher paths of Christian Civilization.

Is it not plain, therefore, O church of the Living God, that the reasons which originated the law of the tithe not only persist but are multiplied!

Judaism's needs were limited to a single nation, occupying a small area, while the needs of Christianity are coeval with time and coextensive with the race.

Where Judaism needed millions Christianity must have billions!

Is it thinkable that Jehovah, Infinite in Wisdom, would give His first and smaller kingdom, an efficient financial system, and then, just when it began to assume ages-long and world-wide proportions with greatly increased demands of every kind, to supplant it with an illogical and impossible makeshift?

Would that be the part of wisdom, of even human wisdom?

And shall it be said that God's far-away people, living in the early morning of civilization, de-

pendent on "reeking shambles and smoking altars" for salvation, were superior in devotion to those who live in the mid-day glory of the latter day church?

*Shall the Jew be enshrined in history as a willing tithe payer, while the modern Christian, with the blessings of his incomparable civilization, stands pilloried before the world as willing to pay one tenth or possibly two tenths as much.**

Christians are not only able to pay more than the ancient Jews, but will pay more when the present faulty mode has been supplanted by God's faultless method.

Bring the judgment and conscience of the church back to God's standard—once raised and never lowered—and the followers of Jesus Christ will keep every treasury full.

Does not our investigation justify the following conclusions:

1. That the minimum requirement for the modern Christian, as for the pre-Christian believer, is the tithe, or ten per cent of the net income.

2. That this tithe belongs to the Lord. It is not within the province of the individual to either retain or dispense, at his leisure or pleasure, the Lord's tithe. The Word reads: "The tithe is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." It is not to be

* Christians in America are now estimated to be paying one-third or one-fourth of a tithe, but there is uneasiness as to how long this will continue.

hoarded in a bank, invested with other funds to be repaid later, nor to be kept while waiting for some "safe and sane" place to invest it for the Master. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that man is neither the owner *nor yet the steward of the first tenth*. That *belongs* to Jehovah. You are not the owner of the separated portion of your income which the state exacts, whether it is levied as city, county, state, or national income tax; it *belongs* to the levying body, and you are not recognized as its steward to invest it otherwise, and finally pay it when, where, and as you please.

3. The Lord's tithe, like the state's tax, is to be paid at the time and place designated, and to the legal representative of the levying authority. The law specified: "There shall be a place where the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there; *thither shall ye bring all that I command you*; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices; *your tithes*, and the heave offerings of your hands, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord." The tithe was to be paid, not retained for future, and precarious, self-administration. If it belongs to the individual, it is his to give or withhold as he pleases; if it belongs to the Lord it is not his, and is not to be retained longer than the first opportunity to pay it at the designated place.

4. That Christian Stewardship, so far as

money is concerned, begins where the first tenth ends. Until the Christian church accepts the full significance of this single sentence it may multiply sentences, paragraphs, books, and libraries about stewardship and tithing but it will largely be meaningless jargon. If, after we have covered the whole subject, we conclude that the tithe is optional and not obligatory; that God asks it but does not require it; and that if we are favorably disposed toward the principle, it is still ours to say when and where and how the tithe shall be used, the effort to reintroduce tithing into the church will largely evaporate into thin air. Unless we reach the conclusion that the first tenth is the Lord's, and as such is "holy," which means "sacred" "unto the Lord," and is never to be reserved, or invested by us; but is only to be *earned, separated, and paid by us*, we shall never know the joy nor the church the power that resides in the full practice of this Divine principle.

5. The tenth paid, may a Christian do as he pleases with the nine-tenths? Indeed not. *All that he has* came from God, belongs to God, and must return to God. He must be the faithful steward of every particle remaining in his temporary possession. How he uses, neglects, or abuses the nine-tenths will show whether he is a diligent, negligent, or wasteful steward.

V

When and How Shall the Tithe Be Paid?

THE author regrets that it seems necessary to weave much of his own experience into this chapter. He has made several attempts to eliminate the personal element, but is more and more impressed that he should let the narrative proceed in its natural order.

More than two decades ago he had the good fortune to read *Systematic Beneficence*, comprising three prize essays, published by Carleton & Phillips, New York. The essayists were Abel Stevens, Lorenzo White, and Benjamin St. James Fry. The time was near for taking the annual budget in the church of which he was the pastor. The finances had been dragging for years, while rich men in the congregation were giving a mere moiety. The pastor determined to put First Corinthians xvi, 2, to the test. If this was the real standard of New Testament beneficence, as the essayists taught, he proposed to bring it home to the judgment and conscience of his parishioners with all the force of which he was capable. A series of sermons based upon that passage, (omitting, of course, all reference to the first clause of the first verse, and to the conclusion of the Apos-

toxic command in the third verse!) based largely upon the excellent exposition of Dr. Stevens, was preached. After explaining the unsatisfactory standards by which men usually measured their giving to the church: impulse, habit, what others gave, the minimum to start with, reserving something for the extra collection at the end of the year, he urged them to readjust their giving on the basis of their *present* prosperity, repeating over and over the Pauline injunction "let every one of you lay by him in store as *God hath prospered him.*" There were men in that congregation who had been greatly prospered. One man who had been advanced from bankruptcy to *great abundance*, and who was giving the same amount that he gave the first year after having been discharged from insolvency, some thirty-five years before! There were other cases equally inconsistent.

The pastor felt that this situation could be remedied by calling attention to what he had been told was the real standard of New Testament giving. He knew that these men and women loved their Lord and were devoted to the interests of His church. Yet here they were giving just as they gave when some of them were not worth as many hundreds as they were now worth thousands. The final sermon of the series, in which there were sundry appeals to readjust their giving on the basis of *their present* prosperity, was adroitly timed (so it was thought) to fit into the

immediate canvass for the budget. The result was awaited with great interest. The disappointment was immediate, terrific! The readjusted giving on the basis of *their present prosperity* was entirely in the imagination of the pastor. The old sums reappeared, a few slightly increased, balanced by an equal number of decreases.

Wondering whether he had failed to make himself understood, the pastor ventured to present the matter in private, and with due caution, to a few of the better-to-do-members of the church. Alack-a-day, he was quickly told by every man, with bristling mien, that *he was* giving according to his prosperity. Several hinted that that was their own *private matter*, which they discussed with no one, and about which they were not in the habit of receiving suggestions, not even from their pastor. One man was spending more for rubber shoes for his horses than he was for the church, while another was putting ten times as much annually into his pleasure yacht as he was into the Kingdom of God, but, since it was their *private matter*, nothing could be done about it! Another said—but what is the use going farther into that which had better be forgotten? Suffice it to say that one preacher decided that he he might as well hope to lift himself over the Alps tugging at his own bootstraps as to raise the standard of giving in the church by letting everybody fix his own.

But this is not the end of the story. One of the most devoted members of this church came to him shortly after his last sermon on the New Testament Standard of Giving, and said: "I have been much interested in your recent series of sermons, but I really do not think you have been on the right track. I have a book at home that I would like you to read." The name of the book has slipped from the pages of memory, but it had been written in competition with the three essays comprising *Systematic Beneficence*, and had probably been rejected because it advocated the principle of the tithe. It had been privately published.

This was the first time the author had ever read one word favorable to tithing in the modern church, and he was profoundly impressed. The party loaning this book claimed to be a tither—the first one he had ever encountered. He at once inquired about the giving of this tither. No, the treasurer said, it had not been exceptional; yes, it was just about what others in similar circumstances gave. In a few months the salary of the tither was increased, while the giving remained the same. Several special appeals were turned away with the quiet statement: "My tithe is just exhausted." The impression made upon the pastor's mind was exceedingly disagreeable. If that was what tithing meant, he saw no incentive to introduce it into the church.

A few years later, in another church, he found a gentleman who had been a positive advocate of tithing for many years. At first he heard him with patience, even delight. He was known to have accumulated a fortune in his business, but for many years his giving had been on a dead level: one hundred dollars per year for the budget, and the same for the benevolences. One day he showed a bank book to a friend, proving that he had ten thousand dollars of the Lord's money deposited in a bank, *and in his own name*. What became of that money? The author knows that a large portion of it finally got into the hands of one of the most astute religious fakirs of the last century, while the church of which he had long been a member to-day has an unpaid subscription of \$250.00 charged to his account!

By this time the author had accepted the principle of the tithe as the Divine method for kingdom support, but never attempted to introduce it because he saw no way to make it operative in the modern church. It was, in his judgment, a simple matter for the primitive, agricultural Jew, to pay his tithes. His income was wholly derived from one or two sources. When the fruit was gathered, the grain harvested, or the seasonal increase of the cattle accomplished, the Lord's portion could be quickly separated and paid. Then, too, paying was such a public matter, bleating and lowing cattle, bulky grains and

fruits, and at definite seasons in the year—when all Judaism was paying—making withholding in whole or in part almost impossible. Everybody knew about what his neighbor ought to pay, and dishonesty was difficult under those circumstances.

But how could the system be made to work in the complicated modern industrial world? Few people knew what the incomes of their nearest neighbors were. Money had superceded commodity, and there could be no publicity attached to the payment of the tithe. The income of nearly every Jew—grains, fruits, and cattle—matured about the same time, making defalcation difficult; while Christians had incomes of all kinds, maturing at all times of the year, and in constantly varying amounts; moreover, modern Christians were living in a big world, instead of one small nation segregated in a territory the size of the American State of Vermont, with voices calling and hands reaching out for help from everywhere; and then, too, people were different (?) from former times, and not as willing to give money for religion; and finally, here were the only two tithers he had ever known, who talked much about tithing, *but where was their tithe?*

Just then, along came Storehouse Tithing—but that is another story.

The author wishes to say, as sincerely and emphatically as he knows how, that he brings

no accusation against the thousands of non-storehouse tithers in all parts of the Christian world. He does not mean to infer that all or many or *any* are like the two described. It must have been his misfortune to have come into contact with that kind. Not only does he believe that tithing on the individual basis is possible, but is persuaded that it is being successfully done in many instances.

In justice to his own convictions, however, he must say that tithing on the individual plan looks like crossing Niagara on a rope. It can be done. Blondin did it. But if everybody had to get on this side that way, most of us would prefer to stay on the other side! Clear visioned, stout hearted, heroic souls, who will go right if all the world keeps on going wrong, can tithe on the individual plan, and tithe successfully, even though they tithe alone. But we are well persuaded that if the principle of the tithe is to be generally accepted, and if the practice of the tithe is to be widely adopted, some method of organizing the tithers, and of *systematizing the payment of the tithe must be found*. Otherwise, campaigns of tithing propaganda will be like the gentle rains that follow the spring zephyrs, refreshing and fructifying, but soon succeeded by the parched heat of summer, in which the church will find itself just about where it was.

The author was the Superintendent of the

Binghamton, N. Y., District, of the Wyoming Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from September, 1911, to April, 1918. He had many conversations with his friend, the Rev. George S. Connell, of Waverly, N. Y., about tithing. Mr. Connell had been a faithful teacher of tithing in his various pastorates, and had been able to lead a number into the practice of tithing on the individual basis. News of what had happened at Geneva, N. Y., where the Rev. Ralph S. Cushman, D.D., had introduced the storehouse plan, filtered through. These conversations now dipped toward the storehouse plan, and soon the Waverly pastor decided to make the experiment. The response was larger than had been anticipated, and the Waverly Storehouse 'Tithers' Association began to function on April 1, 1917, with 140 members. The income of the association exceeded expectations. The number of members grew to 165, and stopped. The pastor came to the fourth quarterly conference with the proposition that, when they had 250 storehouse tithers, all auxiliary methods of finance, duplex envelopes and free will offerings excepted, would be abandoned. The 250 members were enrolled during the budget canvass of 1918. The number has now grown, March 1st, 1922, to 400 members, including 150 children, and has an average income of approximately \$1,000.00 per month.

Then came the Centenary campaign of the

Methodist Episcopal Church, the most ambitious financial undertaking of any denomination in the long history of the Christian Church, with its new emphasis upon stewardship, and its call for a million tithers in Methodism.

In the meantime, the author had been transferred to the Superintendency of the Oneonta District in the same conference. As the time for the concerted stewardship campaign drew near, it is recalled that one enthusiastic village pastor anticipated the event by several weeks, and sent in a glowing account of nineteen tithing stewards enrolled—including all of his leading families. *A few weeks later the Centenary canvass was a dismal failure in that church.* Eighteen months have passed since those stewardship cards were signed but every attempt to get those tithers to function has been successfully evaded.

Another pastor reported twenty-eight signatures, *but nothing happened.* Subscriptions were no larger and payments were no more prompt. Six months later the Superintendent visited that charge and attempted to organize a storehouse association. Just two of those covenant signers joined, one of whom was the pastor.

One of the largest churches on this district organized a 'Tithers' Association, but not on the storehouse plan. The tithers had specially numbered envelopes, and each number was credited with all sums paid into the treasury of the

church. The receipts of this association, when compared with equal numbers of tithers in other churches organized on the storehouse plan, were practically negligible. The situation grew so unsatisfactory that an attempt was made to organize a storehouse association. Twenty-four signatures were secured, and *things began to happen right away*. The first month these 24 members paid \$227.47, a per capita of \$9.47! Two months later the 24 storehouse tithers paid \$142.82, and the 46 non-storehouse tithers \$32.33. The next month 23 storehouse tithers paid \$338.50, and the 46, \$30.07. Five months later this church had 37 storehouse tithers, and 17 on the individual basis; the former paid \$359.94, and the latter \$14.79. A per capita of \$9.72 for the storehouse tithers, and .87 for the individual tithers! * It would be impossible to find a more illuminating illustration of the superiority of storehouse tithing.

A Baptist church had an association of 64 members, *not* on the storehouse plan. Finally, 24 of the 64 organized on the storehouse plan. The pastor stated that those who did not join the storehouse association were of superior financial ability. The first month the 24 storehouse tithers paid \$212.06, or a per capita of \$8.85; while

* These figures have been taken from the columns of *The Storehouse Advocate*, a bi-monthly stewardship paper published by the Stewardship Commission of the Wyoming Annual Conference, and can be verified by referring to its statistical tables.

the 42 non-storehouse tithers paid \$166.00, or a per capita of \$4.15. Twenty-four non-storehouse tithers were immediately made twice as valuable to their church by becoming storehouse tithers!

The author, as the editor of *The Storehouse Advocate* has received many letters like the following:

“We have eighty-four enrolled tithers in our church, but do not seem to be getting along very well. We are not growing in numbers, and *there is nothing to show that we are tithing*, that is, nothing but the private accounts of the tithers. We would like to know something about storehouse tithing. Please send some literature about plans for an organization in a local church.”

This letter was from the pastor of a church with more than one thousand members. He had enrolled about the average number of tithers in a church of that size—nearly 10 per cent. *And there it had stopped.*

Or take this letter from a mid-continent pastor with a membership of over two thousand:

“I am in despair about our 185 Christian Stewards. Is there anything we can do beyond simply pledging them to the principle? I have heard something about a plan to organize the tithers fostered by your conference. Will you please send me whatever literature you may have? I cannot believe that my people are not tithing,

but I positively know that very little of it is coming into the church."

Can a more distressing situation be imagined? The minimum tithe of the 185 on the storehouse plan would have been \$9,250.00—about as much as the two thousand, including the 185 non-storehouse tithers, are *giving* at this time!

Here is another letter from a perplexed western pastor:

"I am enclosing stamps for the pamphlets on storehouse tithing. While I know something about it, yet it may be the solution, as your conference is working it out, for the tithing plan. *I have felt keenly that something was wrong.* Last year, at the Annual Conference, I reported the largest tithing list in the area, and one of the largest in Methodism—350 in the first church. Yet aside from an easier securing of money, *I honestly cannot see where it all has gone!* Hence my anxiety to know of any plan that will conserve the results of tithing campaigns."

Three hundred and fifty signed Christian stewards, and yet the pastor—who *ought* to know—says he "honestly" does not know where it has gone.

Does not this situation illustrate a double truth: Many people will subscribe to any kind of a theory so long as no attempt will be made to put it in operation; and that no theory, however good, is self-operative?

What a pity these 350 Christian Stewards did not have a chance to get started right. That large group probably contains enough men and women of high character, deep consecration, and financial ability to have given that church a place of pre-eminence among the Protestant Churches of the world—if its enrolled tithers had been organized on the storehouse basis. The failure of individual tithers to function is a failure of plan and not a break-down of character. The logic of storehouse tithing together with its public records, prove that conclusively.

One Methodist church in Philadelphia, Pa., had enrolled 164 Christian Stewards. Some fourteen months later an effort was made to organize a storehouse association. At a largely attended questionnaire on Sunday afternoon, the treasurer of the church got up and said that he did not believe in tithing; that more than a year ago 164 people in that church had signed a tithing covenant, and that he *knew from personal knowledge that they had given less money to the church than before they had signed those cards!*

Maybe no special significance is to be attached to that statement, but to us it has a significance both doleful and dreadful. Although that treasurer must have made that statement in the presence of scores of people to whom his remarks personally applied, yet it went entirely unchallenged. Why were not those tithers able to con-

tradict him? *Every one of them must have had personal reasons for suspecting that he was telling the truth!!*

Recently the author had several significant conversations with pastors in neighboring communities. One had a membership of over 900 with 200 Christian Stewards. No, they were not organized. No, he did not know how much they had paid into the church the previous year. No, there had been no marked increase in the income of the church after they had signed the tithing pledge. Yes, the church had always met its obligations before there were any Christian Stewards, and it had always done so since. No, the ministerial budget had not grown, and there had been no surplus. With *two hundred* tithers on the individual administrative basis the church had just barely kept its head above water—*the same as always!*

The other pastor had an association, but on the *limited storehouse plan*. No, he did not know what the income had been for the previous month. No, he could not recall what it had been for the past year. He was very sorry, but he really could not remember just how the funds were divided. Why, he thought the association had a treasurer, but really he did not know what its receipts had been. Yes, to tell the truth, he did not know very much about its affairs. (And so forth and so on, until the questioner, in sheer

pity for the growing embarrassment of his friend, desisted.)

A moment's reflection, so it would seem, ought to convince the advocates of unorganized tithing that it can never be made effective in any large way. Tithing has not been the practice of the modern world. The idea seems new, uncongenial, and drastic. It touches us where we are most sensitive, our purses, and where we have been most unsystematic, our support of the church. Tithing asks us to do what we have never thought we either could do or would do if we could. Tithing means paying from four to nine times as much as we have been giving. It means doing what the majority of our fellow Christians will, perhaps, flatly refuse to do, and what they will condemn in us if we attempt. Accepting an invitation to sign a tithing covenant is not, therefore, equivalent to accepting an invitation to go on a picnic where the ride and refreshments are free!

Tithing, like the moral change involved in conversion, means that the life will be lifted to a higher level. We always like to surround a convert with converts. To send him adrift without the friendly sympathy and assistance of those who have travelled the same way, usually ends in disaster. If the convert can touch elbows immediately with some who are passing through the same initiatory experiences, and with others who have long had their faces toward Zion, the probability

of steadfastness will be greatly enhanced. We would condemn the church which did much to secure but nothing to retain its converts. The tither, like the convert, needs to touch elbows with fellow-tithers *immediately*. He may be able to stand alone, and carry out his pledge in the face of indifference and even opposition. If he is just an ordinary mortal (as most of us are) he will probably give up the attempt after a longer or shorter trial.

But if he can be surrounded with a compact group of actual tithers in the local church; with the pledge to pay his tithe—his full tithe—as soon as it has been earned and received; with the knowledge that others are doing exactly what he is doing; with the inspiration that will come from the achievements of this combined tithe, he will soon become a happy, life-long tither. Why should not the church be just as anxious to retain and develop its tithing converts as it is its intellectual and moral converts?

The Protestant church has shown a genius for organization—except when it comes to its financial resources. Storehouse tithing is the first attempt to supply this deficiency. Notice the care with which the church provides for the religious education of its children, the training of its young converts, and the many organizations in which it seeks to enroll its men and women. Indeed, the church is content to drift nowhere—except when

it comes to financing its own existence. It has shown subtle skill in meeting critical emergencies, but is non-plussed when it faces its own empty treasury. It is traceable to the fact that human cupidity has been substituted for the Divine decision. God and the church do not let us decide how good we want to be. The ten commandments (God and the Church) *tell us how good we must be!* God and the—(no, we dare not write it, for here the church seems strangely unwilling to link itself up with God). Let us try again: God sets the standard for Kingdom support before His ancient, modern, universal Israel; but the church, shaking its head doubtfully, substitutes a variable for God's invariable standard, and one that is exactly gauged to suit the ignorance and selfishness of the human heart.

And now, since the church shows a disposition to return to the Divine plan, will it make the colossal blunder of teaching the principle while neglecting to provide for its practice?

Has not the church learned, by two thousand years of bitter experience, that accepting a principle and putting it into practice is not one but two things; that the *second is always the more difficult* of the two. The American Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, delighted the world at the recent convening of the disarmament conference in Washington, D. C., with his proposal for a ten year's naval building holiday for a war-

weary and a debt-burdened world. And the delight was none the less keen when the representatives of the great nations arose, one after another, and announced, in the names of their respective governments, the acceptance of Secretary Hughes' proposition "in principle."

But why did not the Conference adjourn at once? Was not its work done? Here were negotiators who had travelled half way round the world, and now, having achieved all they had hoped for in the opening hour of the conference, why could they not start on the return journey to-morrow? Was it because the nations, wiser than the church, knew that something more than the *theoretical acceptance of a principle was necessary*. Weary weeks and even months dragged by and the conference which had long since settled the matter "in principle" was still in session trying to settle it "in practice." Some of the prominent negotiators were called home; but no matter, the *conference had to go on until practical methods for applying the principle already accepted had been found!*

Is the church to make the mistake that the *nations did not make* at the disarmament conference, namely, adjourning its activities as soon as its people have accepted the tithe "in principle"? If it does it will have none but itself to blame for the inevitable disappointment it will soon face.

Jehovah commanded His people to tithe and "

provided a place for the tithe to be paid. Teaching the tithe without teaching the tither how and where to pay his tithe would be immeasurable folly.

VI

The Storehouse Covenant

THE writer, through the intercession of the Rev. Gervaise Roughton, for a quarter of a century the pastor of the Wesley Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, has persuaded Mr. Wm. G. Roberts to write the following account of the origin of this movement. Mr. Roberts fails to state that his lips first suggested the plan, and that his hand wrote the first covenant, but such is the case. His account follows:

"In May, A.D., 1895, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Fraser Clark invited Rev. and Mrs. J. W. Magruder, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Yerger, and Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Roberts, to spend the day at their home on Kennedy Heights, a suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio, for the purpose of considering what could be done for the betterment of the condition of their local church home, the Wesley Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church. Those persons named being the minister and his wife, and the others holding the official relations of Class Leaders, Stewards, and Trustees, eight persons in all.

"The season was very mild and the lawn covered with grass, and out in the open the spring day was beautiful.

"After spending the morning and enjoying a very pleasant noon-day meal in the house, and conversation on the porches until about two o'clock in the afternoon, all agreed to go out on the lawn and consider the matter of the present condition of their church.

"Wesley Chapel was now a down-town church, which meant that the more prosperous of its members had moved off to the hills, and that the residue were largely the humbler of the working class and tenants, often moving so frequently that they could not be properly instructed in the Word of God. The former substantial membership had been replaced, in part, by those who were

very unstable, so that numerically, financially, and spiritually the church had been shorn of the sources of strength.

"This company took up all the causes of the dearth that had come upon their local church, and the seeming impossibility of keeping up the financial requirements for local maintenance. The benevolences at this time were quite trivial, while constant appeals and extra efforts including suppers, festivals, lectures, stereopticon shows, subscriptions, and the whole round of man-made plans, schemes, and devises, had been able to secure only a meagre maintenance, and even this was clearly diminishing, so that it was said that if a few more of its members should die or move out the church property would have to be sold.

"It was the opinion of those present that every expedient had been exhausted, and no one could suggest a plan to better the conditions that had not already been tried. Always, after a plan had been suggested, there seemed to appear the legend, 'weighed in the balance and found wanting.'

"Then, as the company was about to break up, having failed to find a solution, one member said: 'I have been a steward for about 25 years in the Methodist church, a class leader, and a local preacher, and we have always had these conditions to deal with, and I suppose it was always so and always will be so.'

"Another said, 'We have not tried all the plans ever heard of.' At once several asked, 'What is there we have not tried? Please tell us.'

"The answer was, 'God's Plan, TITHING!' Several answered, 'why, we all are tithers.' The little company was interrogated, and all said that they had given a tenth for many years, and several said that they had not stopped with the first tenth.

"'But,' persisted the one who suggested God's Plan of tithing, 'do I understand that you have kept a book account with the Tithe of God, and that you have brought all the tithes into the storehouse?'

"Then, on personal examination, it was found that all had kept account of the tenth, BUT NOT ONE HAD BROUGHT ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE, but had distributed it to all sorts of things that come under the name of church and charity, with the result that God's treasury was always empty.

"'Then,' insisted the same one, 'We have not tried God's Plan, and God tells us through Malachi that we are a set of robbers, every one of us, and that He will take the curse off of us if we will stop stealing His Tithes, and bring them all into the storehouse. All man made plans have failed us. If there is one person in this company who will clasp hands with me in covenant relation with God to bring all the tithes into the storehouse, let him do so, and if God be God, he will keep His word, or else there is no God.'

"There followed a short, earnest talk, when one reached forth

his hand and the covenant was made, all then joining in it. Three of the members were then designated to write a covenant, but after several days the committee requested that the one who had suggested the plan should write the covenant. He consented, and after much earnest prayer a blank book was obtained, and the covenant was written, as he believes, under the direct inspiration and in the very language given him by the Holy Spirit. It was written at one sitting, without notes or drafts of any kind, without reconstruction, and has remained unchanged to this day, January 31, 1922. To this covenant, then presented, the names of the others were then subscribed.

"The covenant* was written at 601 East Third Street, Cincinnati, Ohio. The book with the written covenant was brought to the next Wednesday evening prayer meeting. At the close of the service, the pastor, the Rev. J. W. Magruder, briefly extended the privilege of entering into the agreement, stating that those who desired to do so could see the committee, and hear the reading of God's Plan for financing His church.

"Those present of the original company agreeing to the covenant, had the privilege of signing the covenant first. These eight persons, commencing with the pastor as number one, and his wife as number two, signed at once. Then the committee began to present the covenant to their fellow members, earnestly desiring them to study the word of God, pray over it, and, if convinced that it was God's plan, to sign the covenant.

"Four hundred and thirty-seven have signed this covenant to date. Many have gone to Heaven, and many have gone to other fields of labor and residence. Yet from the time when the covenant was first taken to this present time, Wesley Chapel has never had a debt; her conference benevolences were vastly increased, while the ministerial support was divided into 52 weeks and paid each Monday morning. She has gone safely through all financial panics, increasing constantly in numbers, in spirituality, and in financial ability. The banner of Jehovah still floats over His little fortress, where His people hold that He is the God of Truth, and never breaks His covenant with those that fully trust Him."

The church for centuries to come will be under obligation to Mr. Wm. G. Roberts and the men and women associated with him for this venture *all the way forward to God's Plan*. While the

* While this covenant is essentially different from the one found on page 77, yet it was the first storehouse covenant ever written. To Mr. Roberts belongs the credit of projecting the idea into the mind of the church.

example of Wesley Chapel was followed, in part or in whole, in some neighboring churches and neighboring states, yet it did not secure wide and persistent publicity.

When, on Lord's Day, December 12, 1915, one hundred and twenty-five people walked down the aisle of the Geneva Methodist Episcopal Church, in response to the call of their pastor, the Rev. Ralph S. Cushman, D.D., for those who would covenant to bring their full tithe into the storehouse, a new chapter was opened in the history of the movement to *bring the church forward* to God's plan for financing His church.

An indebtedness of more than \$82,000 rested on this church; the annual budget called for \$12,000 for maintenance and interest; the canvass had been made, leaving the church only eight thousand miles (dollars) from its goal!

In less than thirty days those 125 storehouse tithers had lifted the church from the depths of despair to the heights of victory. The debt was still there, but *God had opened a passage through the raging sea of debt*. The pursuing Egyptians with their mortgages and notes were no longer feared. The morale of the church had been restored. All knew that some day they would stand on the other shore, *and dry shod*. The story of what had happened at Geneva soon found its way into the church press and created a profound impression.

When Dr. Cushman took charge of the Stewardship Division of the Joint Centenary Commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, although storehouse tithing was not featured, yet the storehouse covenant,* as finally evolved in the Geneva church, was widely circulated throughout the denomination. This covenant, with some minor changes, follows:

I. In loving loyalty to our Lord and as an acknowledgment of His ownership, we covenant to pay the tithe of our income for the purpose of maintaining and extending the Kingdom of God.

II. We do covenant with God that we will bring His portion, the full tenth of our income, into the Storehouse, that, as He has commanded, "there may be meat in mine house" for the building of the kingdom.

III. We agree that this money shall be cared for by the Treasurer of the Storehouse Tithers' Association, and divided, by vote of the association, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, proportionately between the support of the gospel, the various benevolent enterprises of the church, and other work of the kingdom, as shall be agreed upon by the association.

IV. We further agree in that liberty which is in Christ, in case of unusual tithe, or special Divine leading, any individual shall deem it necessary to direct the division of his tenth, that he may be permitted to do so by written order on the treasurer, a full record of such transaction to be kept on the books of the association.

V. We further agree that having entered into this covenant, we will not be under obligation to sign any additional subscription, or pledge for any church work or benevolence. Our dues to any of the authorized church organizations to which we may belong will be paid by the treasurer of the Tithers' Association out of the tithe money on written orders approved by the executive committee. But in case we make additional contributions "according as the Lord hath prospered us," they will be regarded as free will or thank offerings.

* This covenant was one of the official documents issued by the Joint Centenary Commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and re-issued by the Committee on Conservation and Advance of the Methodist Episcopal Church in January, 1922.

Exposition of the Storehouse Covenant:

(I) This covenant proceeds upon the assumption of the Divine ownership. All we have and are belong to God by virtue of creation, preservation, and redemption. We are users, not creators. We go out as we came into the world, penniless, unclothed strangers. To recognize this as an academic truth is one thing, to reduce it to a *fact in daily practice, including the entire circle of our income*, is quite another! Everything was here when we came, and everything will be left when we go, and yet our fate in eternity will depend upon how we used or abused the things of time and sense.

(II) "The full tenth.....into the storehouse." This is the crux of the covenant, its one difficulty and its chief glory. But why not? To whom does the tithe belong? To you? *Not if God knew what He was talking about!* "All the tithe.....is the Lord's." That was not said by an ancient conclave of puzzled ecclesiastics who did not know how to finance the kingdom. *God said it!* Has he changed His mind? If so, to whom has *He* imparted the information? A decree can be revoked only by the issuing authority—unless that authority is lost; a law can be repealed only by the enacting legislature—unless it is abolished or overthrown. Has God been dethroned? Has His authority lapsed with the passing centuries? If God is God, what *He said* .

one thousand years, or two thousand years, or *five thousand years ago, He says to-day.* God never solves the same problem twice, because He always solves it right the first time. *As long as the same conditions exist the Divine solution, once given, stands forever!*

Moreover, at the end of the month to whom does the rent for the house in which you have lived belong? Have you the right to keep it in your pocket as long as you wish, and then distribute it where and when you please, giving your landlord such portions as you see fit?

Why should you assume to do with your Lord's property what you would not think of doing with your landlord's rent? Is it because you have greater respect for the latter than love for the former? Or is it because you fear the sheriff and the scorn of your neighbors more than the displeasure of Jehovah? Is it not the secrecy attached to the one and the publicity that must go with the other, that encourages so many to do to God what they would be ashamed to do to their landlord?

You are not the steward of that which you do not own, and have not the right to keep, handle, or invest. You are the steward of the nine-tenths, but not of the first tenth. That is, if God was not mistaken when He said: "All the tithe. is the Lord's." What you do with the nine-tenths determines whether you are a

good, careless, or a wicked steward. What you do with the first tenth determines—when you once know the law—whether you are honest toward God, or otherwise.

“We do covenant with God that we will bring His portion, the full tenth of our income, into the storehouse,” is a decision of the highest importance. While no time is specified, yet the meaning is immediately, or as soon thereafter as possible. The Lord’s tithe was always paid first, first fruits, and firstlings of fields, flocks, and herds. Rents, railway fares, taxes, and a thousand other things can be paid *because there is a definite time when they must be paid*. All of God’s children can tithe when they learn to *pay the tithe upon the receipt of the income*. God’s portion is a first charge against the income, not a fag-end left over after necessary and unnecessary personal and family expenditures, and even luxuries and foolish extravagances have been subtracted. God never designed that His portion should be paid out of the surplus—if there happened to be one. That comes first, not secondly or fifty-seventhly. And God’s tithe should be where God’s tithe belongs, in His treasury, and not in the pocket of an individual to whom it does not belong.

“That there may be meat in mine house,” and there always is—when God’s tithe is in its designated place. Storehouse tithing, when practiced by a fair proportion of the membership of a

church, fills every treasury, pays every bill, and always leaves a comfortable surplus; changing the church from mendicant to benefactor, and from a beggar of alms to a bestower of benefices.

(III) The Executive Committee, which always includes the pastor, have the power of recommendation only. Proposed expenditures must be presented to this committee. This prevents needless discussion, and impulsive, ill-advised action. The association, however, is the final judge of each case.

Each association is free to divide its income as it pleases. This division, where there is no building enterprise or burdensome debt, is as follows: 40 per cent for the budget, (including all items for the support of the local church), 40 per cent for the denominational benevolences, and twenty per cent for the contingent fund. The dry rot of selfishness should be avoided in the division of the tithe. The benevolent portion, except in extraordinary cases, should not be less than 40 per cent, and should never be permitted, *under any circumstances*, to sink below 30 per cent. Paring down our obligation to the unsaved world is not the open sesame to the Divine favor.

The "contingent fund" is just what its name implies, a 20 per cent reserve fund for contingencies. How is it used? To pay the dues of the members of the Association to the various societies in the church, such as the Ladies' Aid

Society, the Women's Foreign and Home Missionary Societies, the expenses—when the Association is sufficiently representative—of the Sunday School, and to help such outside organizations as the Anti-Saloon League, the Y. M. and Y. W. C. A., the Salvation Army, also any local benevolence for which a subscription is being taken in the community, or foreign need such as Armenian or Chinese relief.

Will a contingent fund of 20 per cent be sufficient? It will be enough and to spare. The writer is acquainted with the life story of at least 200 storehouse associations, some more than four years old, and all in existence at the time this was written. These conclusions are based upon their experience.

(IV) This is one of the most important sections of the covenant and, while not often utilized, removes the last objection for any one who thinks he will not be satisfied with the regular division of the funds decided upon by the Association, for

(a) If he thinks his tithe is larger than the local church needs, or will use to advantage, he can disregard entirely the decision of the association, and direct how every penny that he pays into the Association shall be spent. This is his right, inherent in the covenant, and cannot be abridged by the Association. He can either give the treasurer permanent directions as to the dis-

tribution of his tithe, or he may direct how each portion of his tithe shall be divided.

(b) Disregarding entirely the size of the tithe, if any member of the Association is conscious of “special Divine leading,” and feels that he should have the liberty to “direct the division of his tenth” he “may be permitted to do so by written order to the treasurer.” This privilege is not granted by vote of the Association. It *belongs* to him by right of the covenant. His order to the treasurer is sufficient to complete the transaction.

(V) This needs no elucidation, and simply means that the payment of the tithe is the first limit of financial responsibility for the welfare of the kingdom.

VII

Advantages of the Storehouse Plan

IT is a thoroughly digested, widely tested plan. Its provisions are few, definite, and workable. *It either succeeds or fails immediately.* You do not have to wait six weeks, or six months, or six years to know how it will work or what it will do. If its provisions are accepted in theory while denied in fact, *it will be known at once.* It is never a lingering success or a long drawn out failure. Thirty or sixty days will be long enough to determine whether the fiber of the theoretical tithers in your church is sufficiently fine and strong to stand the storehouse test.

It provides a time for the actual beginning of the payment of the full tithe. A time—a definite time—*for beginning.* That is all important. Occasionally we awake with a start to realize that the good we had intended to do can never be done because we have *waited too long to begin.* We all like to think that we are going to do just the right thing—sometime in the future. Not to-day, of course, hardly to-morrow, nor yet this week, but some sweet day “bye and bye.” Most of us die before that “sweet day” dawns. That is the tragedy of life. It is probable that the lonely,

individual tither stumbles here. He does not have to begin at once. It may not seem convenient or possible to do so. There is no urgency about the matter. *He is pledge free as to time and place.* Has he not a perfect right to consult his own judgment and convenience? Next month, ah, then he will begin! But when a group of Christians agree to begin to tithe their incomes on the first day of January, 1922, pledging themselves to bring the full tithe into the storehouse Sabbath by Sabbath, that is an end to all hesitation. By the thirty-first of the month every one has had a taste of real tithing. In a few months each one is a seasoned tither.

It will mean the actual testing of the only plan that God ever gave for financing His kingdom. Mr. Roberts was right, after the futility of all suggested and tested plans for saving Wesley Chapel had been admitted, *that there was one plan that had not been tried.* They tried it, and Wesley Chapel, about to die, still lives. The practice of this plan will soon show whether people can tithe, whether they can afford it, and what co-operative tithing will accomplish. If you have one hundred individual tithers in your church, one thousand guesses as to what they are doing with their tithe will leave the question unanswered; but if you have one dozen storehouse tithers in your local church, you will not only know whether they are tithing, but where their

combined tithe is being used. In other words a storehouse association always reduces tithing to a *fait accompli* instead of a "hope deferred that maketh the heart sick."

It cultivates the systematic payment of the tithe. We do not easily acquire good habits, especially new ones. Careless or bad habits can only be supplanted by better ones systematically practiced. If we are simply going to pay tithes sometime, somewhere, it will be a good deal like the old plan of paying anything, anytime, anywhere. Tithing, to be done successfully, must not be done occasionally, spasmodically, but regularly. The Storehouse tither soon becomes acclimated, and tithing one of the regular, delightful habits of life. An accumulating, unused tithe is a scriptural anomaly and a dangerous fact. The Jew paid his tithe promptly, *at the place appointed*. It was not his to be hoarded. God provided for its immediate use. An unused tithe is a misplaced trust fund. Its appeal to the cupidity of the tithe payer will be irresistible. If the reserve tithe is large, why add to it? And if it is large, why not keep it so? And the easiest way to keep it large is to be slow about getting rid of it! The individual tithe treasury should be just large enough to hold the tithe one week or month—as it is earned—and then completely emptied. Frequent accountings make the tither of much more account to God, the church, and

himself. *Storehouse tithing emphasizes the use of envelopes instead of account books. Dealing square with God, and keeping squared up with God is its goal.*

Storehouse tithing soon creates enthusiasm for the tithing system. The lonely tither may know at the end of the month how much he has paid. But he does not know whether other tithers have paid, or the sum total of their combined tithe. He may enjoy the approval of his own conscience—and that is much—but he knows nothing of the enthusiasm of a group of tithers when they stand astonished at the size of their co-operative tithe. The smiles on the faces of storehouse tithers when the receipts of the first month are made public, seem to indicate that each one had received an unexpected legacy. But there is always a latent fear that the first record can never be repeated. As month after month passes and the early high water mark is passed again and again, and is occasionally doubled or even trebled, as special tithes are paid, interest and astonishment are widespread throughout the community, while the joy of the tithers is unbounded.

Storehouse tithing means that the full tithe of every member will pass through the channels of the church. We do not know a single pastor, anywhere, in any denomination, who has been satisfied with the results of unorganized tithing. Such doubtless exist, many of them, and we by no

means assert that unorganized tithing must always fail. But personal knowledge and correspondence indicate that it has not registered the high success anticipated. It does not so much seem to be a question of payment as of misdirected use. One pastor writes that a group of his young people, who had signed the tithe covenant, were saving it for a two weeks' stay at a popular summer resort, and were quite indignant when he attempted to point out their error. Another said that his leading tither (?) was devoting most of his tithe to getting his boy through college. Still another pastor states that one of his best tithers, a very dear personal friend to whom he did not feel free to speak, was using his tithe to support his mother-in-law! His heart was in the right place but he was getting his money from the wrong place. Individual tithers fall easy victims to religious *fakirs*—or seem to, at least. We personally know a number of such, one in particular whose husband said that his wife would do just as much good with her tithe if she scattered it broadcast in the highway. "Yes, more," (his exact words) "for then some of it would fall into the hands of people who either needed it or would make good use of it." *Storehouse tithing stops such wanton waste.* It also honors the church by making it the channel through which the alms of its members reach the world. *The stamp of the church is always on such checks,*

and attention is called to the existence and power of the church.

Storehouse tithing takes advantage of the gregarious instinct in human nature. People of like opinions, aims, and practices do not have to be pushed—they gravitate together. We desire fellowship with those traveling in our direction as eagerly as water searches for its level. How can isolated, individual tithers be mutually helpful? They have nothing in common, except a theory. Experience shows that they are very “touchy” about its practical application. The writer has dear friends who are tithers, but he has not one who has ever volunteered a statement as to what he really did with his tithe. He has never asked, of course. And his friends have felt, *of course*, that what they did with their tithe was their individual matter. Ah, that is just the difference between the individual and the storehouse tither. It is impossible to disentangle one’s self from the sense of ownership as long as the tithe is retained, while storehouse tithing, separating the tither completely from his tithe, makes the Divine ownership a *fait accompli*.

Storehouse tithers have nothing in controversy and much in common. The amazing accomplishments of the co-operative tithe form inspiring topics of conversation. They meet on terms of equality and fellowship in the business and activities of their Association. The publicity given to

the fact that they are tithers, and their membership in an association of real tithers, help to keep them true to the principle and practice of the tithe. Individual tithers in the same church may or may not know each other. There can be little exchange of ideas and sympathy between them. Each one is concealed by a barrier of secrecy, and isolated by a rampart of independence—and that without profit to himself, or benefit to the principles he cherishes, and at regrettable cost to the kingdom. It is that kind of *independence* that makes the church *dependent*.

Individual tithing, even when successfully accomplished, has not changed the status of the church—it is still a beggar.

If every member of a local church tithed on the individual plan the problem of taking an annual budget would still have to be faced, and every tither would have to be *individually persuaded to donate a part of the Lord's tithe to His work!* And he would still have the right to say how much, and where, and when he would pay of the *Lord's tithe toward the Lord's work*. Beggars would still have to go from door to door, knocking timidly, waiting patiently, returning persistently, asking deferentially, and taking thankfully—what the tither was pleased to *give of the money that did not belong to him!*

We believe that such a group would give more because they were tithers, but who knows how

much more, or how long they would give it? What others gave, and not their tithe, would be the measure of their giving. Do you not see that the old method (begging) and the old standard (what others gave)—both reprehensible—would eternally persist? There would still be the same annoying tendency to keep the budget as low as possible, and the same distracting self-assertiveness which is the bane of the church.

But the church beggar goes out of the back door when storehouse tithing comes in at the front door. No argument is necessary to get the storehouse tither to part with his tithe. As regularly as the dew falls or the sun rises that comes into the storehouse. Not in part, mind you, but the whole. There is no retention of the tithe while the tither is trying to decide where it shall go.

There may be an occasional sermon on God's method of kingdom support, but of old fashioned, vociferous, joke-lubricated public begging, a storehouse church knows nothing. Storehouse churches very generally dispense with the collection plates, since the unobtrusive payment of the full tithe renders all *devices* unnecessary. We will find out a little later what it means to have from twenty-five to three hundred people paying from four to nine times as much to the church as they formerly gave; and to pay it regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, and year after year, with-

out complaining, coaxing, boasting, or the haughty assumption of privileges based upon "excessive" generosity. Talk about a distant millenium to a long harassed finance committee, distracted church treasurer, or timid pastor who has long fretted over the endless deficiencies of existing methods of church finance—where there is a strong storehouse association the millenium is not to be, *it is!*

Storehouse tithing does not ask how much the church budget is, and then assume the right to sit in judgment on it—sitting "on" is right! The whole tithe is laid down where it belongs—at the feet of the Master. Instead of asking how much the church needs, whether it cannot get along with less, and how does it happen that more and more is asked, storehouse tithing quietly proceeds to fill the treasury to overflowing. Instead of cutting the budget to fit a diminishing income, it automatically expands the budget to fit an enlarging outgo. (A condition undreamed of anywhere except in storehouse churches.) Storehouse tithing automatically transforms the church, *at once*, from a halting mendicant with apologetic mien and palsied hand extended for an alms, to an alert, clear eyed, quick functioning spiritual teacher and helper of the man who lives in the house by the side of the road of life.

Individual tithing, even when successfully practiced, would perpetuate one of the worst evils of

the subscription system—the church Boss. The larger his tithe the greater his power. He must have his way or the tithe will (or may) be diverted. The poor preacher is kept hanging “by the eyelashes,” while the finance committee counsels caution, and the anxious treasurer rarely smiles. Everybody knows what he does, and all are kept afraid lest the Great One, because of some frustrated whim, will do less. Again and again, under the subscription system, we have seen him reverse the action of the official board with a frown, because of the church’s dependence upon his “voluntary” gift.

Among the positive thrills of storehouse tithing has been the joyous—to us—submergence of this brother. You might as well search for a flock of dodo’s in your back yard as expect to find him in a storehouse church. (An instance is recalled where a subscription of \$75 had long permitted a wealthy “leading member” to have “his way.” A distracting “way” it had long proved, but had to be endured. Noticing his absence from several official meetings, an inquiry brought this answer from the pastor: “O, his power is gone. What do his threats amount to since we have a dozen mill hands, some of them scarcely more than boys and girls, paying a larger tithe than his former ‘big’ contribution.”

It is impossible to find a more democratic institution than a storehouse association. One might

suppose that it would divide into “little” and “big” tithers, and that there would be endless gossip about how much the various members were paying in. The very opposite is true. The tithe being paid by numbers and not names, and the treasurer always being a discreet individual, little is ever known or asked about individual tithes, and no over-lordship is known to have been attempted by those who must have paid the larger sums. We know a young man who paid a tithe of over \$800 per year for more than three years before it occurred to the pastor to put him on the official board. (Under the old system he would have expected little less than a vote of appreciation every thirty days, a complimentary banquet every quarter, and the right to say whether the pastor should go or stay at the end of every year.)

Maybe it is due to the fact that the storehouse tither does not “give” anything, but simply pays the Lord’s tithe—something that he does not own and cannot “give.” Anyway, we know Christians who are paying annual tithes of \$200, \$300, \$500, \$800, and on up to \$4,000, and doing it unostentatiously, with no air of super-generosity, or expectation of being accorded the right of final decision on every question. Think of such sums being paid regularly, without asking, announcing, or public accounting! Is it not the dawning of a new day of opportunity and responsibility for the church?

Storehouse tithing always means that the giving of the non-tithers will be increased. Many who will not join an association, under the influence of the achievements of an association, will double, triple, and even quadruple their gifts. How can they avoid it? Fellow Christians are paying from four to nine times as much as they gave, and are happy about it. They are doing this not by compulsion, or under the influence of emotional appeals, or in response to a grave emergency, but regularly, willingly, and voluntarily. How can the non-tithers keep up the old statement that they are giving to the limit of their ability? And how triflingly small do the old standards look in the presence of what the tithers are paying? In this genial atmosphere the giving thermometer immediately speeds up, and in two or three years it reaches heights never believed possible. "Let me tell you about that man," said the pastor, "he used to give \$13 a year. He failed to join the association, but is now giving \$104 a year." He also told of another man who had advanced his giving from \$52 to \$200, and only a little while before put in a check for \$50 extra, with the remark to "use it where it was most needed." You cannot lift a man's giving very high when your only appeal is to the standard of his own prosperity, for there are not many people in the world who think they are really prosperous—or as much so, at least, as they think they

ought to be! (We have known men to go from comparative poverty to affluence without appreciable increase in their giving; while some have gone from affluence to *great wealth* without increasing their giving one farthing, and, in several deplorable instances, have actually decreased.) But when you have a compact group of storehouse tithers paying right on through the years, in sunshine and rain, sickness and health, prosperity and adversity, when times are good and when times are bad, according to one definite standard its effect upon the church and community will soon be noticeable, and the standard of the non-tithers will be lifted higher and higher.

Storehouse tithing ties its members to the church in a new and peculiar way. The church that lives by the whole round of hurdy-gurdy methods, and is always poor, can scarcely retain the respect, to say nothing about the affection of its constituency. We have often been distressed by the flippant way people have spoken of their church, and the lightness of their attachment to it. Classed as a beggar, they feel toward it as they do toward all beggars.

But when the practice of storehouse tithing gives the church enough and to spare, the situation changes instantly. When the church can substitute discounted bills for its perpetual "behindhandedness," those who were ashamed become proud of their church. The church then

takes its place among the efficient employing and serving institutions of the community, paying its employees living wages, and indefinitely enlarging its activities, while its streams of silver and gold, *coming from the infinite resources of God's plan, never dry up!*

How can the church mean very much to the man who spends from twenty-five to seventy-five cents per day for cigars, and twenty-five cents a week for the church? Or to a family which spends from five to ten dollars a week for various kinds of theatrical entertainments, and one dollar a week for the church? Does it not look as though the theatre, in their estimation, is from five to nine times as valuable as the church? *Reverse those expenditures*, and the situation would be normal! When religion's share is \$2, \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100 per week (as it rapidly becomes under storehouse tithing) the church begins to occupy a different place in the thoughts, affections, and activities of individuals and families.

VIII

Storehouse Tithing in Practice

THE classic examples of Wesley Chapel, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Geneva, New York, have already been quoted. Twenty-seven years ago storehouse tithing not only saved Wesley Chapel from closing its doors, but has kept it a vigorous moral and spiritual influence in the needy part of a great city. A few years ago there were thirteen Methodist churches in the "downtown" section of Cincinnati, some small, medium, and a few of them large. From 1911 to 1914 Wesley Chapel gave *double as much to missions as these other twelve churches combined*. At the end of twenty-seven years of storehouse tithing Wesley Chapel had all bills paid, and a surplus in the bank of \$1,450.14.

Storehouse tithing not only kept the Geneva church from crashing on the rocks six years ago, but is the chief source of its strength to-day. A letter just received from its present pastor states that the income of the association for 1921 was the largest in its history, \$8,705.05. So much at the beginning for the *stability* of storehouse tithing.

April 1, 1917, was another historic date in the

development of the storehouse movement, for on that day the Waverly, N. Y., association of 140 members began to function. What has happened since is too long a story to tell here. Suffice it to say that it now has a storehouse association of 400 members (including 150 children), a benevolence budget of \$6,000.00 per annum, a ministerial budget of \$5,000.00, and is carrying on a program of educational and recreational activities such as is unsurpassed by any American church of equal size. The storehouse association has increased the income of the church from \$5,000.00 to \$15,000.00 per annum. The association to date, March 1st, 1922, has had a total income of \$50,000.00, with a monthly income approximating \$1,000.00.

But the Waverly church, aside from being a startling and consistent example of the possibilities that lie in the storehouse plan, has rendered invaluable service to the movement in that it has generously loaned its pastor, the Rev. George S. Connell, and certain laymen, notably the Hon. Frank L. Howard, to the church at large. During the past three years these men have addressed hundreds of churches, group meetings of ministers and laymen; summer schools, assemblies, and annual conferences. This intelligent seed-sowing has had much to do with the present widespread interest in the subject.

It is interesting to note that the second store-

house association in the Wyoming Annual Conference was organized at Sayre, Pa., only a few miles distant from Waverly, N. Y., beginning to function Dec. 1st, 1917. Here a new edifice had just been dedicated, and the financial obligations were heavy, but for four years Sayre has met every local demand in full, and has made generous responses to denominational allotments. This association now has 170 members, with a monthly income from \$600.00 to \$800.00. Its total receipts to date have been \$30,000.00. Waverly and Sayre have not raised one dollar by fairs, suppers or entertainments during this period, but have continued to use the duplex envelopes for those who were not tithers.

We will abandon the attempt at historic sequence, for at this point the storehouse movement in the Wyoming conference, having gained the proportions of a fair sized snow ball, swept into the valley of churches with ever increasing size and speed. The marvels it has wrought in the past three years cannot be told to the outside world without provoking smiles of incredulity. From now on we shall only mention names and places in isolated cases, but the author holds himself responsible for every sentence written, and will gladly furnish that which is omitted to any who may inquire.

An association of 75 members was organized in a church with 450 members. The entire budget

of this church, including all items of ministerial support, property maintenance, and the complete circle of benevolences, the women's missionary societies alone excepted, had been \$3,100, and never had been raised in full. The first Sabbath the receipts were in excess of \$100. The tithers were gratified, but did not expect that record to continue. They said: "A number of us have been saving our tithe, and it cannot be so large in the future." But the next Sabbath, and the next, and the next, right on through some thirty-eight months that record has been kept up. Its total income for this period has been \$15,000. In the meantime its one large industrial plant, upon which the prosperity of the community largely depended, had one of the most bitter and prolonged strikes in the history of the nation. Some of the tithers were involved and were forced to leave town. The whole community was soon in the throes of financial distress. The other churches were disastrously affected. The income of the tithers' association was perceptibly reduced for a short period, but soon recovered. Do you catch the significance of the statement that whereas the entire budget including benevolences, was only \$3,100 per year, the storehouse association of 75 members began to bring in \$100 per week, or \$5,200 per year. That is, 75 storehouse tithers, for more than three years, have been paying a tithe of \$2,100 in excess of what 450 people

gave through the duplex envelope system. And then, too, that budget of \$3,100 had never been raised in full! Remember, this was not an extra spurt, or a contest by rival teams, or a heroic facing of a grave emergency—lasting for a few months, and now forgotten. Not at all, for 38 months the money has come as naturally as sunshine after rain and as regularly as the rolling in of the tides. When the Centenary campaign came along, this church was apportioned the sum of \$3,100 annually for a period of five years—just the amount of the whole previous budget. Although the tithers' association had been functioning only a few months, it did not hesitate to subscribe \$1,500 per year, while the non-tithers subscribed the remainder. At the end of two years the tithers had not only paid their subscription in full but the second year volunteered to make it \$1,600, while the non-tithers defaulted \$900 the second year!!

One of the historic churches of this conference is located in the downtown section of a city of some eighty thousand inhabitants. For many years it had been fighting a losing battle, and it only seemed to be a question of time when it would succumb to the inevitable. It had never been able to raise a budget of \$5,000. Three years ago a storehouse association of 75 members was organized, the average income of which has been more than \$6,000 per year. That is, 75

storehouse tithers have paid more every year than 1000 members were ever able to give. Very near the bottom in the per capita giving toward the benevolences, it at once marched to the head of the district. Please recall that these 75 storehouse tithers were not hand-picked from the wealthy families of the church. The association was composed of volunteers who, in a public service, agreed to test the system for one year. They were men, women, boys, girls, and children. They were wives without separate incomes, high school and college students, widows with fixed incomes, merchants, mechanics, laborers, school teachers, and clerks. But this is a sample as to how the system works: One young woman had just graduated from college. She was without income, but joined. Soon she had a small income, and paid her tithe. In a year she had a situation away from home, and was sending back a tithe of \$120 per year. Under ordinary circumstances she would have been giving nothing much anywhere, certainly not at home, since she was there only a few months of the year. If she had subscribed, one dollar per month would have been considered generous! Take another sample: A modest young man had just moved to the city. He joined the association, and is now paying a tithe of \$800 per year! If he had walked in the footsteps of several rich men in that church who are giving according to the prosperity standard,

his annual contribution would amount to about \$1.38½.

Let us see how the system works in the country. Some years ago Garrattsville, in Chenango Co., N. Y., had become so depleted in population that the doors of the Methodist parsonage had to be closed, while the church became a part of the Edmeston charge, with preaching every other Sabbath. An occasional gasp was the only sign of life, while its pulse beat, feeble and intermittent, indicated that *rigor mortis* would soon supervene. But a brave pastor decided that the procession in the wrong direction had gone far enough. He moved over with the district evangelist, and opened the long closed doors of the parsonage. A revival of religion resulted. The people became clamorous for a pastor of their own. They were told that if they would organize a tithers' association of at least fifteen members, and give a two months' demonstration that they were really paying their tithe they should have a preacher. They did so. This is the report of the twelve members who paid their tithe regularly through the year:

Tithe number	one	.....	\$103.60
"	"	two	..... 45.00
"	"	three	..... 60.00
"	"	six	..... 59.72
"	"	seven	..... 28.08
"	"	eight	..... 34.40
"	"	ten	..... 10.50

"	"	eleven	46.00
"	"	twelve	12.00
"	"	thirteen	13.00
"	"	fourteen	20.00
"	"	fifteen	215.00
			<hr/>
			\$647.30

This association had just nine wage earners, in a rural community without a single industry, and with the nearest railway station seven miles away. It had been paying \$275 for one-fourth of a preacher, and about one-tenth of his time. This year it is paying \$800 for a resident pastor, while the district sustentation fund brings it up to \$1000. Every obligation of the church has been met month by month. A Sunday school of twelve or fifteen has grown to one of ninety members, while a community house to care for the overflow and to provide for enlarged service, will be built next year.

Another church, recently organized, and still struggling to pay for its new building, organized an association of 37 members. Its pastor was receiving a salary of \$500 per year. The receipts were from \$185 to \$250 per month. The ministerial and benevolent budgets were immediately doubled.

Laurens, Otsego Co., N. Y., had always been on a two-point circuit. It was growing feebler through the years, with extinction looming nearer and nearer. An effort to hasten its demise provoked a reaction, and it insisted on having its own

pastor. It had never paid more than \$350 per year for pastoral support, but agreed to raise \$600, which was soon increased to \$800. In the middle of the first year a storehouse tithers' association of 25 members was formed, and *in a few months the pastor's salary was raised to \$1,300 for the next year.* And that was in a non-growing rural community without a single industry. An increase of \$950 in one year! If those 25 people had simply agreed to tithe their incomes, spending it when and where and how they pleased, not knowing how much their combined tithe would amount to, or how much of it would be paid into the church, or how long it would be kept up if once started, do you think that they would have undertaken such an obligation?

The official report of a church of 1000 members for the year 1919 showed a total income of \$6,432.95, a per capita of \$6.43 plus. A tithers' association of 100 members began to function May 1st, 1919. Its receipts for the first year were \$7,308.85. That is, 100 storehouse tithers—again not hand-picked from among the financially able of the membership, paid \$975.90 *more than the entire membership of 1000 had given the previous year!* It is also worthy of note that the following year this association, *without any increase in membership*, had an income of \$12,132.89. Or, the 100 storehouse tithers, in the

second year of the existence of the organization, paid nearly twice as much as the 1000 had given two years before! You can see what the full tithe of this church would mean to the kingdom. If the tithe of 100 would be over \$12,000.00, the tithe of the 1000 would be \$120,000.00. In this church, also, the paying of the tithers has greatly stimulated the giving of the givers. In three years the income of this church has increased over \$19,000.00. That is, the total income last year was in excess of \$25,000, a per capita of \$25, an increase in the per capita in three years of \$18.57!

Another church was greatly discouraged. Its membership was small, its property deteriorated, and there were not wanting those who thought the time had come to close up its affairs. There was an afternoon appointment, and that was in a worse plight. A storehouse association was organized. In two years the salary was increased from \$800 to \$1,800, while the benevolence budget was paid in full. Do you think this would have been possible if these 25 people had simply signed a tithe covenant, paying their tithe anywhere or nowhere—just as they pleased?

Statistics show that the average annual income in the United States is \$500. That is, dividing the total income earned by the total population gives a per capita income of \$500. But remember that everybody is included: Men, women, boys,

girls, children, babies, wage earners and non-wage earners. This makes a per capita tithe of \$4.16 $\frac{2}{3}$ cents per month. *The Storehouse Advocate* has collected and published detailed, accurate, and comparative statistics of the incomes of 150 storehouse associations, and the contributions of non-tithers in 150 churches for the past two and a half years. The calculations that follow are based upon these statistics.

Let us first see how a few of the associations meet this exacting standard of \$50 per year per member. These storehouse associations do not have a carefully selected membership. They, like the population, are composed of men, women, and children, (only babies omitted); with husband and wife counting two in the association but generally only one in the income, and children with only fragmentary incomes.

Kingston, Pa., with 79 storehouse tithers, paid a total in twelve months of \$8,022.18, or a per capita of \$101.54. This association is composed of 49 females and 30 males, fourteen of whom are minors, including some small children.

The Norwich, N. Y., association of 49 members paid a tithe of \$3,919.25, or a per capita of \$79.98.

The Carbondale, Pa., association of 91 members paid a tithe of \$5,908.27, a per capita of \$64.92.

The Oneonta, N. Y., association of 100 members paid a tithe of \$12,132.89, or a per capita of \$121.32.

The First Church, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., association of 129 members paid a tithe of \$11,825, a per capita of \$91 plus.

The Centenary Church, Binghamton, N. Y., association of 71 members paid a tithe of \$6,148.53, or a per capita of \$86.59.

The Congregational church, Oxford, N. Y., association of 15 members paid a tithe of \$1,664.68, a per capita of \$110.94.

The Lutheran church, Oneonta, N. Y., association of 14 members paid a tithe of \$1,024, a per capita of \$73.50.

The First Baptist Church, Johnson City, N. Y., association of 115 members paid a tithe of \$7,184, a per capita of \$62.40.

The Storehouse Advocate carries statistical reports from 133 associations on the Binghamton, Oneonta, and Wilkes-Barre Districts of the Wyoming Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Let us examine these reports for the first sixteen months in which the paper was issued, being careful to remember that the per capita tithe for the United States is \$50, and the monthly tithe \$4.16 $\frac{2}{3}$. (We will drop the fraction.) The result for 133 associations for the long period of 16 months is as follows:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Months</i>	<i>Per Capita</i>	<i>Excess Per Capita</i>
1920	Jan.-Feb.	\$5.15	\$.99
"	Mch.-Apr.	5.42	1.26
"	May-June	4.65	.49
"	July-Aug.	4.25	.09
"	Sept.-Oct.	4.66	.50
"	Nov.-Dec.	4.44	.28
1921	Jan.-Feb.	4.61	.41
"	Mch.-Apr.	5.07	.91

Does not this demonstrate, beyond all question, that storehouse tithers really tithe? It would be impossible to subject these reports to a severer test than we have just applied. In such a large number of associations, and all in one annual conference, every type of church and community is represented. Some of them, very naturally, would be functioning poorly, and some even very poorly. No matter, the good ones and the poor ones, the little ones and the big ones—all are counted in. None have been weeded out because their reports were not up to the standard. They were all taken just as they were, and the enumeration made just as they had been published to the world. (The author will furnish a complete file of *The Storehouse Advocate* to anyone, anywhere, who will pay the cartage, and agree to return the same; he can then make his own investigations at his leisure.)

As this copy is being revised for the last time the latest edition of *The Storehouse Advocate* has just come to hand. It contains the statistics for the months of November-December, 1921. The

recent editions have been carrying an "Inter-Denominational Statistical Report." The last number has reports from 26 associations, 11 Baptist, 1 Lutheran, 1 Congregational, 1 Presbyterian, and 12 Methodist. The Methodist associations are, of course, outside the bounds of the Wyoming Conference. These twenty-six, Baptist, Lutheran, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Methodist associations, with a membership of 1,655, reported total receipts for the months of November-December, 1921, of \$13,352.11, a per capita of \$8 plus for the two months, or of \$4 plus for each month. The non-tithers in these same churches, for these same months, paid a total of \$10,865.76, a per capita of \$2.43 for the two months, or of \$1.22 per month against the storehouse tithers' per capita of \$4 plus!

This quotation from the November 1st, 1921, bulletin of the First Baptist Church, Oneida, New York, is worthy of close attention:

"The offerings of this church last year for the New World Movement were \$2,209.00, and for all missionary and benevolent purposes \$2,557.00. This year it gave to the New World Movement \$5,958.42, and for all missionary and benevolent purposes \$6,184.87.

"Last year the offerings for current expenses amounted to \$4,741.00, this year the offerings for current expenses were \$6,614.05.

“Grand total for all offerings last year, \$7,298.00.

“Grand total for all offerings this year, \$12,798.92.

“Last year business was good, and the people had steady employment at good wages.

“This year, since January 1st, business has been dull, with some factories shut down altogether, and others on half time or less.

“We believe this remarkable increase in church offerings, under such adverse conditions, is due entirely to the fact that for nine months of this year there has been a storehouse tithers' association in this church, which began with 75 members, and has now grown to a membership of 115.”

One industrial community in the bounds of the Wyoming Conference is in the throes of a disastrous financial depression. Its chief industry, employing 1300 men and women, and at large wages, has been closed down for more than nine months. Noticing that the storehouse receipts had only fallen off mildly, the author wrote to the pastor and received the following answer:

“It is only too true that we are having a hard time industrially. Our relief work this winter will equal all we have had to do for five years past. We are running just about even in the matter of current expenses—though we raised \$500 in the fall to offset shrinkage in our income. The storehouse association made it possible to raise this sum by giving the first half. Then ———, himself a member of the association, had to spend days and days in a personal canvass to get the rest of the five hundred. Our Centenary

is 98 per cent. paid to date—quite largely due to the association. Our association, for two years, had an income of \$7,000 plus per year. This year it will reach the \$5,000 mark—a very, very remarkable showing in the face of existing conditions. The association has accumulated over \$4,250.00 in the new church fund. Ordinarily this amount would have gone to the current expense and Centenary funds. In which case we should have had a large balance in the treasury, and an overplus for the Centenary.”

Without a storehouse association this church would be “on the flat of its back,” with salaries unpaid, and benevolences rapidly approaching the zero mark. And do not forget that when special help was needed the storehouse association *immediately gave* \$250, while one of the storehouse tithers had to spend “days and days” begging a like sum from the non-tithers. The storehouse association did not have to beg one cent, *but immediately drew its check for half of the sum needed!*

IX

Objections Answered

THE Storehouse plan reintroduces Old Testament legalism. A friend recently made this objection. He was quietly asked: "What do you mean by Old Testament legalism?" His answer was quite muddy, but holding him insistently to a definition of "Old Testament legalism" it ultimately became apparent that he had a general notion that the Old Testament Christian was told what to believe and what to do, while the New Testament Christian had the *privilege of believing what he pleased and doing what he wished!* Is that your idea? If that is true, it must be jollier to live under the low standard (every one fixing it to suit individual taste) of the New Testament than under the exacting (fixed by God) standard of the Old Testament. Then it follows that the swift moral progress of the past two thousand years was made possible by the repeal of the stiff "legalism" of the Old Testament, and the wide dissemination of the New Testament plan, which allows every man to fix the standard to suit his fancy! Not a very agreeable conclusion, but inevitable from such inaccurate premises.

Friend, God knows us too well to *let us decide how good we want to be*. Knowing us inside and outside, He never stops short of telling us *how good we must be!* O, no, we do not *have* to be that good. In fact, we can be just as bad as we want to be, or as our opportunities permit. But high before the gaze of passing generations God has lifted His moral standard. We may break it at will, *but never without being broken!* Is that statement true or false? True, you say. But is it anything less than the rankest “legalism”?

Is it true that, while the Old Testament demands much, the New Testament commands nothing—excepting only such belief and obedience as we are pleased to render? It is true that the New Testament has no specified codes like the few that are found in the Old Testament. But it has its own definite, iron-clad, legalistic requirements, such as:

“He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, *shall be damned*. Mark xvi, 16. Stiffer legalism is not found in the Old Testament, but we have never heard it declared invalid on that score.

“That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John iii, 15. Does not this confer certain “legal” rights on believers?

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me,

hath everlasting life." John v, 24. But what becomes of those who do not hear, or hearing, do not believe? Are they not deprived of certain "legal" rights enjoyed by those who both hear and believe?

Do these passages indicate—and their number might be indefinitely extended—that the New Dispensation leaves us to believe what we please?

"For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many who have sinned already, and have not repented of uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed." II Cor. xii, 20-21.

Does this passage—and dozens of others that might be quoted—indicate that Christians, under the New Dispensation, have the right to believe what they wish and do as they please?

There is not one whit less of "legalism"; that is, *exact, definite, unrepealed and unmodified moral requirements and intellectual beliefs demanded in the New Testament than in the Old Testament.*

The New Testament is redolent with loving invitations, (and so is the First Testament) but *what happens to those who do not accept these*

invitations? Is their damnation the less certain, the less real, and the less enduring? In fact are they not much more terrible? Is it not the New Testament which emphasizes, by the lips of Jesus Christ, the eternal endurance of God's wrath against sin, and the eternal punishment of sinners?

Nay, does not the New Testament lift the moral standard infinitely higher when it makes the desire to commit sin equal to its accomplishment?

If that is not carrying "legalism," so called, to the *nth* degree, we do not know the meaning of language, written or spoken!

If we are going to reject the law of the tithe because it is a "legal" requirement—and that is the meaning of so-called "legalism" objection—how can we consistently apply this rejection only to the law of the tithe, and not to the whole gamut of God's "legal" requirements? Is not faith in Jesus Christ "legalism"? We *have* to believe in Him; we *have* to confess Him before men; we *have* to walk in His footsteps; we *have* to live the kind of life that He definitely directed. These things are not optional, they *are* obligatory. That is, if we do not wish to incur His displeasure, *which interpreted means eternal death.*

Is the objection of "legalism" valid only when we are squirming out of obedience to the one law that God made for financing His kingdom?

The ten commandments are the personification of "legalism." Are they, therefore, out of date?

Strange, is it not, Christians are the keenest contenders for the sanctity of law in civilized society. They rail against the so-called "lawlessness" of their age. They trace the woes of the world to growing irreverence for law. *But when it comes to the question of God's law for the support of God's cause, they are a champion lot of side-steppers!* Then the cry of "wolf," "wolf" is heard throughout the land, while an excited imagination pictures God's holy and just law as a ravening beast with blood-shot eyes and gnashing jaws, ready to devour the helpless. For shame!

We do not dare to raise the false cry of "legalism" against the ten commandments, nor yet against the positive, terrifically significant and even ominous statements of Jesus Christ, such as: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; *and few there be that find it.*" Does it not become apparent that, as we come to the close of the period of God's visible revelation, the standard is raised higher and higher, which means that the higher spiritual laws of the new dispensation have acquired greater and not lesser authority!

"The storehouse plan looks mechanical, there is too much clanking machinery about it." Is that the reason you have never ridden either in or behind a locomotive? Is that why you prefer

your own pedal extremities to the “clanking” machinery of an automobile? If you had your way would you scrap all machinery, and return the race to the hand-labor slavery from which it has just escaped? We pity our fathers of even yesterday who were not served by the highly developed machinery of to-day. Who thinks of objecting because machinery is mechanical and “clanks” some?

Nor are we at all adverse to the introduction of machinery (organization) into the church. The Sunday school is a thoroughly organized institution, constantly growing more so—and more efficient; the young people of the church have a medley of organizations—and all are needed; the adults of both sexes are organized for a variety of purposes—and who ever thinks of objecting? All of this is quite mechanical, *and quite necessary*. The efficiency of a modern church is measured by the skill displayed in organizing it from top to bottom, and the perfect co-ordination of its various organized departments. Such a church means that scores of people instead of sitting with folded hands or drifting idly about, have been set to definite, supervised tasks.

And who thinks of objecting until we come to the difficult and delicate question of financing the church? Just where and when Christianity needs perfectly planned and skillfully geared machinery it breaks down entirely. We have sad memories

of urging good men through weary months to complete the annual canvass; yes, and even bitter memories of having to lend a personal hand finally. And those weary searches for new ways of inveigling a few dollars; whether a little more could not be wheedled out of the Ladies' Aid Society; whether the community would "stand for" another bake sale, clam chowder party, oyster supper, pound party, poverty social, or minstrel show before the year ended, and whether Brother Holditfast would not loosen up a bit when the pinch came if he were put on the official board in the meantime. Bah, memory revolts at all the sorry mess!

Machinery? Was not all of that machinery, and about the poorest kind in the world? Every joint creaked, every other bolt seemed to be always missing, and the way the thing kicked, groaned, and bumped indicated that the third, fourth, and fifth cogs in every wheel had long since been ground to powder, while its constant habit of irregular back-firing left an aftermath of broken arms, legs, and heads (feelings, sensibilities, and splintered tempers)!

The machinery of a storehouse association is simple, but effective. Its money comes like the rain and the sunshine—without effort. No subscriptions are taken; no delinquent notices are sent; no auxiliary sources of income are sought, and no hectic appeals are made to members to

“pay up.” *This is the only money raising organization in the church that dares dispense with these devices.* The annual meeting fixes the percentages for the various objects, which is rarely changed during the year. It is really hard to find enough business to make the monthly meeting attractive. You might suppose that people who were paying in their whole tithe would be found crowding the front seats at the business meeting, so that they could have a lot to say as to how it should be spent. But such is not the case in actual experience.

“It is not the amount of money involved in the tithe that I object to,” says another, “but the fact that I am not allowed to administer it.” We confess that we have grown a little tired of that objection. In twenty-four cases out of twenty-five it has been made by people who are not and have not been tithing. Most of them have admitted that they had not tithed their incomes, and the evidence that the remainder had been tithing rested upon their personal assertion.

If people are willing to tithe, but not on the storehouse plan, why in the world do they not do it? There is not only no impediment but no objector. Why have they not begun long ago, or why not begin to-day? To refuse to tithe at all because they will not tithe on the storehouse plan, is the flimsiest kind of an excuse. And yet, so many people would leave you under the impres-

sion that this is their only difficulty. Is it not their handiest and most reliable excuse?

At an important religious gathering a preacher descanted eloquently on the “th-r-r-r-rill of the personal administration of the tithe,” and was quite anxious he should not be robbed of this “th-r-r-r-r-ill.” We want to say several things about the personal administration of the tithe.

There is no possible way by which you can check up the personal administrator on the primary question as to whether he is really paying his tithe. What he is paying into the church is not, he generally insists, a fair test. That is an end to the whole matter. Inquiry cannot be carried further, and additional information is not generally vouchsafed. But you always know whether storehouse tithers are true to their covenant. *Defalcation is possible, BUT CONCEALMENT IS IMPOSSIBLE.* The per capita thermometer reveals whether the full tithe is being paid. While some small associations in the Wyoming Conference functioned poorly and soon died (having never been more than a name), against not a single association of 35 or more members has there ever been lodged the suspicion that the tithe was not being paid.

There is also no way by which you can check up the personal administrator as to the use he is making of the Lord's tithe. Recall the Western preacher with 350 personal administrators in his

church, and who wailed: "Honestly, I do not know where it all goes to." Let this fact console him: ignorance on that point is universal! Nobody knows what he does not know. Permit us to say what has been said a number of times: we do not assert that personal administration is impossible, or that personal administrators are dishonest. You will not only do the author a grave injustice if you entertain those ideas, but you will entirely miss the point of his argument. *Personal administration of the tithe is possible, and is being successfully practiced by many believers in this generation.* Experience has developed a serious objection to personal administration: why should personal administrators be so shy about telling what they do with the Lord's tithe? The author has never, in a single case, been able to get the thousandth part of an inch in that direction without having the personal administrator close up the subject with a great big bang! Why, because he considers the expenditure of the Lord's tithe a "personal matter." But we insist that that is just where he is mistaken. If the tithe were his that would be so. But "the tithe is the Lord's." All of it, and all of it should go into the support and extension of the Lord's visible kingdom on earth. All the world may know where every penny paid into the treasury of a storehouse association goes. Concealment is unnecessary and is

never attempted. Its accounts are open to the world.

There is not a shred of authority, in Scripture or in history, for the personal administration of the Lord's tithe. From the time of its establishment down to this day the Lord has designated a place where His tithe, the whole of it, was to be paid. The only administration of the Lord's tithe that the Jew knew anything about was the privilege of paying it. He claimed no privilege of distribution, as he had no right of retention. Down to the time of Henry VIII the Lord's tithe was quite generally paid to the church. Prior to that time no trace of the personal administration of the tithe can be found. This practice originated in the sporadic revival of interest in tithing by isolated individuals and groups during recent centuries. Tithing being neither the custom or law of the church, those who wished to tithe their incomes had no recourse but to personally administer the same. But since it is the least efficient way to tithe it should only be practiced when absolutely necessary. An association should be formed if only two or three incomes are to be tithed. Their combined tithe, paid regularly and used systematically, will accomplish more than unchecked and undiscussed personal administration.

An individual administrator must (or should) be a good accountant, an art in which many of us

are woefully deficient. His tithing account would require frequent attention. Every item of income and expenditure would have to be carefully kept. That would be easy to some, possible to many, but impossible to the great majority. This task is greatly simplified for the storehouse tither. His tithing account can be squared to the last penny every Lord's day. He has every incentive for paying promptly. He knows that his fellow-tithers are paying regularly, and he is always interested in the latest receipts of his association, and wishes to keep the total as high as possible.

The thrill of personal administration sounds well when the r's are properly rolled, but it is more theoretical than actual. Our storehouse associations contain numbers of former personal administrators, and a fair proportion of these have said that they were glad to be rid of the burden and uncertainty of personal administration. They have admitted two difficulties: Personal administration was too casual, occasional, and optional, while the anxiety as to where the tithe should go was sometimes a real burden.

Suppose that 100 people in your church, and fairly representative of the average ability of the congregation, form an association. Experience shows that their tithe will fluctuate between seven and twelve thousand dollars per year, depending of course, upon the personnel of the association. *The association has now become the steward of*

the Lord's tenth. Instead of having one hundred separate, unconsulted judgments as to how this money shall be used, with the always present danger of individual ignorance and selfishness asserting itself, you have the collective judgment of the entire association. It is still true that in counsel there is safety. Is it not true that this co-operative tithe, where every expenditure is determined in open meeting after opportunity for full discussion, will be more efficiently used than if spent independently? That question admits of no discussion and only one answer.

This nation exercises great caution in the selection of its Chief Executive. Before and after nomination his whole record is subjected to the keenest scrutiny. Every ascertainable fact of his life, good or bad, wise or foolish, little or big, is dragged into the limelight. And that high position can be obtained only by one upon whose past the fiercest light of hostile investigation can fall *and find no blemish!* But the nation is too wise to ever put itself wholly into the hands of even such a man. His acts are entirely administrative—carrying out the laws that many others have made. He may establish administrative precedents, *but he cannot make or repeal a single law.* He has vast power, but it must be confined within constitutional limits, or congress will exercise the right of impeachment. *This nation never puts itself in the hands of one man to do with it as he*

pleases. When God called for the separated portion, the sacred tenth, He never planned to leave it indefinitely in the hands of one man, but provided a definite place where it should be paid.

'The proper disposition of the first tenth of our income, the Lord's portion, should be a matter of grave concern. Can a more satisfactory method of disposition be found than to bring our united tithe into one treasury, and then, at the end of every month to meet with our fellow-tithers, and after patiently seeking the Divine direction, and with full opportunities for the expression of personal opinions, decide how every cent can be best used for the glory of God. That means that not a single penny will go to a single destination that cannot stand the light of publicity, and run the gauntlet of open discussion. It means that there will be no foolishly impulsive, or uninvestigated distribution of the Lord's tithe. Here is all the "liberty" that the individual tither could desire, combined with the largest possible efficiency in the use of the tithe.

The tonic effect produced by uniting the Lord's tithe is unbelievable by the inexperienced. Unit- ing the Lord's tithe is not only a source of supreme satisfaction to the tithers, but it gives their united tithe a propulsive power, a striking force, a lifting influence, *which transforms the whole life of the visible church!*

Here is where the real "th-r-r-r-r-ill" of ad-

ministration is found, and not in lonely, isolated, irresponsible, and untabulated solitariness.

“A storehouse tithers’ association would be a divisive influence in a church,” says another, “if very large its accumulation of funds would lead to intolerable overlordship in all the affairs of the church.”

The “accumulation of funds” is the last thing that a storehouse association attempts. It does not believe in wasting, but it does believe in using, not accumulating the Lord’s tithe. It aims to get the Lord’s money at the exact spot where it can be used to the best advantage in the quickest possible time. We do not know a single association that is accumulating a reserve unless it has a definite object in view. If a percentage is reserved for a debt, or as a sinking fund for a new church, it is always—as far as our knowledge extends—handed over to the board of trustees. While it rapidly accumulates funds, a storehouse association is neither a holding nor a spending concern. The whole of the Lord’s tithe is passed on at once to those designated to receive it. The amounts set aside for the budget and benevolences are paid to the treasurers of these funds each week, and the only part remaining in the local treasury is the small contingent fund. At the end of the year this is also disposed of. Every association begins every year with an empty treasury. This not only keeps the whole of the Lord’s

tithe at work, but prevents any possibility of overlordship through the power of reserve funds.

The "divisiveness" introduced into the church by a storehouse bloc is a "bogy" invented by those who are *not storehouse tithers, and who have had no contact with storehouse tithers in an actual storehouse church*, and who would not know a storehouse association if they saw one walking down the highway! According to that theory conditions throughout the Wyoming Conference, by this time, must resemble a perpetual Donnybrook fair! The opposite condition prevails, and is largely due to the sense of security and sufficiency introduced by storehouse tithing. There are fifty active associations on the Oneonta District, and the author visits from two to four of these churches every week. If there is any side of these churches with which he is not acquainted it must be the inner side of the inside, and he unhesitatingly asserts that storehouse tithing is a unifying force everywhere and a divisive force nowhere! Instead of being jealous of the tithers, and hypercritical of their achievements, the non-tithers generally refer to the association in their church with pride. The reader cannot be unaware of the unsatisfactory financial status of the ordinary church. Each church bemoans its poverty, and is tickled like a baby with a new rattler when it can just manage to squeeze through the year without a deficit.

One financial secretary was a born wit. At the first official meeting he had ever attended the new pastor was delighted to hear him say: "All bills paid," and then reaching for a package of papers on a chair by his side he flourished them in the air, saying as they were brought down with a resounding whack on the desk of the Treasurer: "Except these." Is not that always the experience: "All bills paid.except these." "Except these," like the poor, we always have with us. But when you have come to the end of the thirty-sixth month without the presence of Mr. Delinquent Exceptthese; while the smiling treasurer makes the usual announcement of all bills paid and a comfortable margin in the treasury you will understand what storehouse tithing means. The quiet storehouse tithers know how it has all happened, and the non-tithers would be less than human if they did not enjoy the spirit of optimism which has gradually permeated the entire life of the church.

✓ "Well," says another, "I am willing to *give* a tenth, but I do not want to *have* to do it." Who ever suggested compulsion? God is not like the state. It tells us what we have to do, and will not hesitate to handcuff and imprison our bodies, confiscate our property, *and take our lives*, if we do not do as we are told. But God tells us what we ought to do. *He* does not use handcuffs, prisons, confiscations, and executions. However

much God may want us to do His will, and however many incentives He may hold out to us, He always leaves us free to do *exactly as we please*. If your judgment is convinced that the tithe is a legal and reasonable obligation, and if your conscience urges you to pay it promptly and fully, well and good; but if not, we will be satisfied to leave the matter to be settled between God and yourself. We do not believe that God wants you to pay His tithe unwillingly. Unless you are moved by loving loyalty, it might as well be left undone. But while we can live at peace with you if you do not pay the Lord's tithe, and are willing to excuse you (so far as we are personally concerned) from its payment, *we cannot absolve you from responsibility for such failure*.

Do you support your wife and children because you want to or because you have to? Now, now, just keep your voice down in one of the lower registers, please. Because you want to, of course. But suppose you did not happen to want to? Lots of men do not, only to find that they have to even though they do not want to. It never occurs to a normal man that the support of his family is optional. And we never feel that a man deserves any credit for doing what the law would compel him to do if he neglected or refused to do it. It is the plain implication of Scripture that the claims of the Creator and Redeemer come first—*even before the family*. God never asks for the

mildewed remnants of gathered harvests, but always for the first fruits, whether of field, vine, or flock. The Christian is bound up to the welfare of the kingdom of Jesus Christ (represented by the visible church) by ties more sacred than any known under the Old Dispensation. Animals were slain for the sins of the Jews, *while the Son of God died for us!* Instead of our obligation being less, it is infinitely greater and instead of our duty being optional Calvary's blood binds it upon our consciences with bands that can never be broken. The Christian who understands his obligation to the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and the Visible Church will pay the Lord's tithe with joy, not because he has to but because it is the natural expression of a natural, loving heart. *There is no higher virtue than wanting to do those things judgment and conscience say we ought to do!*

5 "I believe," asserts another, "that properly instructed people will give more, and will give it more willingly, than they will pay according to a definite standard:" This objector will probably admit that the Christian church of to-day has been fairly well instructed in the art of giving. At what point has this education been neglected? It has seemed to the author that the very church bells have been taught to drone out the monotonous plea "g-i-v-e—g-i-v-e—p-l-e-a-s-e—g-i-v-e—g-i-v-e—g-i-v-e—O-O-O-O-p-l-e-a-s-e" in end-

less, tiresome, meaningless iteration. The constant manner in which the privilege and duty of giving has been held before the church in sermons, hymns, and the printed page should long since have turned Christians into hilarious givers, and filled to perpetual overflowing every treasury.

It will be admitted, we think, that the church has not neglected to instruct its constituency in the art of Christian giving. First Corinthians xvi, 2, has had the right of way for four centuries. We need not speculate as to what that plan may do, for we have seen it in operation all our lives, and we know what it did not do before we were born. The duplex envelope, with its dual offering for budget and benevolence, has helped the church to a better support during recent years.

But does the giving of the giver, when properly instructed, exceed the tithe of the tither? That is an interesting question. Can it be answered? It can. *The Storehouse Advocate* not only reports the number of tithers in each church and the sums paid per month, but also gives the number of duplex envelope contributors and the amount given per month. Let us take the issue of November 20th, 1921, (the most recent at the time this was written), and compare the paying of the tithers with the giving of the givers.

Bear in mind that this comparison is for the month of October, 1921:

<i>Church</i>	<i>No. Tithers</i>	<i>Total Paid</i>	<i>Per Capita</i>	<i>No. Non- Tithers</i>	<i>Total Paid</i>	<i>Per Capita</i>
<i>Methodist Churches—</i>						
Oneonta, N. Y.....	100	\$1,137.78	\$11.37	500	\$445.79	\$.89
Norwich, N. Y.....	50	315.20	6.30	268	300.19	1.13
Sidney, N. Y.....	67	382.36	5.70	145	188.12	1.30
First, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.....	127	806.00	6.71	910	1,273.00	1.30
Forty Fort, Pa.....	53	419.00	7.70	275	380.00	1.31
Sayre, Pa.....	170	652.00	3.25	220	202.00	.94
Endicott, N. Y.....	110	1,078.84	5.40	275	545.00	1.98
Tabernacle, Binghamton, N. Y..	50	1,078.84	4.57	550	2,248.39	4.08
Fairview, Binghamton, N. Y....	74	403.58	5.45	100	311.01	3.11
High Street, Binghamton, N. Y.	70	387.33	5.53	250	386.15	1.55
Chenango St., Binghamton, N. Y.	240	795.00	3.31	270	73.98	.28
Centenary, Binghamton, N. Y...	71	573.31	8.07	242	320.80	1.76
Athens, Pa.....	150	423.28	2.82	350	254.68	.74
West Side, Elmira, N. Y.....	120	516.88	4.31	50	73.75	1.47
Middleburg, N. Y.....	19	108.92	5.57	300	159.77	.55
Columbia Ave., Phila., Pa.....	27	288.53	10.69	600	397.08	.67

<i>Church</i>	<i>No. Tithers</i>	<i>Total Paid</i>	<i>Per Capita</i>	<i>No. Non- Tithers</i>	<i>Total Paid</i>	<i>Per Capita</i>
Fayetteville, N. Y.....	36	\$150.40	\$4.17	50	\$82.60	\$1.65
Wenona, New Jersey.....	30	135.81	4.52	66	138.38	2.10
Furman St., Syracuse, N. Y.....	47	883.99	18.80	450	1,490.87	3.30
Baptist Churches—						
Johnson City, N. Y.....	115	608.05	5.29	215	443.50	2.07
Conklin Ave., Binghamton, N. Y.	101	374.28	3.70	247	203.97	.82
Parsells Ave., Rochester, N. Y..	170	1,022.18	6.01	...	.....	....
First, Oneonta, N. Y.....	40	437.38	10.94	413	734.68	1.78
Second, Auburn, N. Y.....	138	617.13	4.47	190	668.78	3.52
First, Albany, N. Y.....	21	141.38	6.72	77	163.13	2.12
First, Oneida, N. Y.....	116	600.09	5.16	135	255.18	1.79
Lutheran Church—						
Oneonta, N. Y.....	14	100.68	7.19	140	150.92	1.08
Congregational Church—						
Oxford, N. Y.....	15	154.75	10.31	67	78.91	1.18
Presbyterian Church—						
South, Elmira, N. Y.....	37	168.20	4.57	95	287.56	3.02

The report for the South Presbyterian Church, Elmira, N. Y., is for the month of December, 1921, because no Presbyterian church reported for the issue of October-November, 1921.

About every type of church is represented in this investigation, and it strikingly exhibits the possibilities of the two systems.

In most of these churches the duplex envelope system has been used for years. It is well understood and its possibilities have been exhausted. Tithing is of recent origin in all of these churches. It is not so well understood, but its superiority is apparent.

The non-tithers usually have some in their ranks who can give larger sums in emergencies, but the tithers—from all the statistics available—will pay vastly more through the years because their money will come regularly, and in quantities sufficient to encourage continuous kingdom development.

Can an intelligent mind scan these comparative figures and not recognize the superior system?

After subjecting both systems to the test of actual operation, is it not apparent that bringing the full tithe into the storehouse is undeniably the superior?

“I do not like the storehouse method because it is rigid, inelastic,” complains another. If by “rigid” you mean a definite standard by which you will measure the first payment from your in-

come toward the support of the church, the storehouse method must plead guilty; and if by "inelastic" you mean the actual, regular, full payment of the Lord's tithe, the storehouse method is once more the culprit at the bar. It was designed to do those two things, and we judge the results justify us in writing *quod erat demonstrandum*, do they not? The storehouse plan is intended for those who take the law of the tithe seriously, and who propose to pay it promptly, regularly, and fully. But each association leaves the actual payment of the tithe to the consciences of its members. It permits no investigations as to who are paying, or how much they are paying. Every member signs the covenant agreeing to bring in his or her full tithe, and receives a package of envelopes without identification marks. Its case rests there. The responsibility is now with the individual, and not with the association. Experience proves that this confidence is not misplaced. Among the thousands of storehouse tithers we have not heard of a half dozen who were suspected of taking advantage of this situation. A storehouse association is a poor harboring place for one who is paying the tithe only in theory.

And then, too, is it not time for the church to understand that it will positively share, upon the basis of the Lord's tithe, in the incomes of its constituency? The present hortatory methods of

appeal not only always leave it with an inadequate response, but with a subscription that is worth only from seventy-five to fifty per cent of its face value.

If you want a system of un-rigidity that will always let you fix your own standard, and with sufficiently accommodating elasticity to allow you to pay any percentage of your promise that you please, we should judge that the storehouse plan of paying the Lord's tithe would *not suit you*.

X

The Danger of Compromise

MAN'S fatal facility for compromise has been one of his handicaps through the ages. As soon as he gives mental assent to a truth he can no longer deny, he invents methods for softening its impact upon his conscience, while avoiding its application to his own life as long as possible. Recall the futile compromises by which men sought to solve the slavery and liquor problems. Abolition and prohibition were the only possible solutions from the beginning. Everybody sees it now, and yet *there was a time when nobody saw it*; while fame, fortune, and even life was sacrificed by some who saw those truths in the beginning! Man loves to try expedients, while devious by-paths have a fascination never to be resisted. He will go the right way—only when there are no more wrong ways to try! Abolition and prohibition are historic proofs of this fact.

Just as soon as the achievements of storehouse tithing were bruited abroad men began to invent compromises and modifications. They desired to achieve the same end, but they wanted an easier, a softer way of doing it. This is man's way

with everything, and is to be perpetually expected, of course. But concerning all plans for limiting or modifying the storehouse plan, we wish to say:

1. Whatever you do with the storehouse plan of tithing, *do not compromise the principle of the tithe*. If you have never done so, set aside the Lord's tithe from this day until your translation. If you are going to be a personal administrator, all right, but *be one!* You know the poverty stricken condition of the average church, how all prevailing modes of finance leave it wringing its hands in despair, while a sinning race hurtles into eternity. You know now that the law of the tithe has never been repealed; that the prophets you revere and the Saviour you love were all tithers; that Jesus emphatically commended the principle of tithe paying, and that He never introduced any other method, *nor authorized any one else to do so*; that the Christian church was supported by tithes during the first sixteen centuries of its existence; that, without authority from anywhere, God's plan was overthrown by a king who was both adulterer and murderer; that for four long centuries the Christian church has turned from one man made financial experiment to another, only to be disappointed in the last one tried—as it always has been and ever must be—yes, all of this you now know. Friend, if God has opened your eyes to see that the principle of the tithe has

never been repealed do not, we beg of you, ever compromise *there*.

2. Do not say: "I am willing to tithe my income if every member of the church will do it, or if we can at least start with every member of the official board." Right never waits for unanimous consent, or even a majority vote. If the voice of the people is always the voice of God, *then God is mostly wrong, and it usually takes three or four centuries to get Him on the right track*. What nonsense! Man does not like God's ways because God never gets right finally. He is always right in the beginning. And men are God-like when they are big enough, not to do right when everybody will do it, but to do it if it must be done *alone*. Is this the attitude you maintain toward the other commandments? Do you hate your enemies because everybody will not love theirs? Do you desecrate the Sabbath Day because everybody will not keep it holy? Do you dishonor your Father and Mother because all children do not honor their parents? Are you a thief because everybody will not be honest? The judgment day is going to be an individual affair, when each one must give account of himself. How does my dereliction excuse yours or yours mine? If the Lord's tithe is demanded of one it is demanded of all, and not when all agree to pay it. *The Lord's tithe is not validated by unanimous consent; it is just as valid when nobody consents!*

The man who will not follow his conscience until its decisions are confirmed by majority action is setting a dangerous precedent for himself. That rule, consistently followed, will ruin any character.

3. If you have decided in favor of the principle your next step will be to discover the most efficient way for paying the Lord's tithe. Asserting that you will pay it "anyway you please" is a wrong spirit in which to approach so serious a matter. Remembering that the "tithe is the Lord's" and that "it is holy unto the Lord," that is, it is the truly sacred or holy part of our income, we should arrange to pay it in the most practicable and efficient way possible. What we particularly want to do with it should have little consideration. We should desire only one thing: To pay it in the way that will be the most pleasing to God. That may mean paying it in the way that will be least pleasing to ourselves, but there is no reason why we should please ourselves in a matter of this kind. It is not our tithe that we are handling but God's, and those considerations of self that control so many of our other expenditures should not be allowed to have the least influence over us. It seems to the writer that the considerations controlling should be somewhat as follows:

How can I pay the Lord's tithe so that

1. I will truly pay it.

2. So that I can encourage others to pay it.
3. So that my tithe will be put to the best possible use.
4. So that I can keep in sympathetic touch with other tithers.
5. So that I will not be diverted by the indifference or opposition of non-tithers.
6. So that tithing will become one of the fixed principles and settled habits of my life.
7. So that I can best help to bring the Christian world back to the standard of the Lord's tithe.

Can anyone, with the established facts of storehouse tithing before his eyes, ask these questions and conscientiously adopt some less efficient system for paying the Lord's tithe?

Scores of Christians have said: "That is the best way, of course—if people will adopt it." But why not get Christian people, people who want to pay the Lord's tithe, to adopt it? If it is the best way, and if there is no authority in Scripture, and no justification in history for the personal administration of this tithe, why, pray, should not all Christians adopt it?

4. Make no compromise with the limited storehouse plan. This plan proposes that each member of the association shall be allowed to *retain* the twenty or twenty-five per cent usually set aside for the contingent fund, and be allowed to use it when and where they please. Experience

has proven this to be a fatal compromise, and for the following reasons :

(1) There is no warrant in Scripture for the division of the Lord's tithe. The Hebrew never thought of taking a part of the Lord's tithe to the designated place, while keeping the rest for personal distribution when and where he pleased. The vials of prophetic wrath would have been poured out upon the head of any attempting such malfeasance, whoever they might be. "Even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come; *and thither ye shall bring your burnt offering, and your sacrifices, and your tithes.*" Modern Christians seem to think that the Lord's tithe is simply any tenth of their income, whether it is the first tenth, or the sixth tenth, or the ninth tenth, the last tenth, or the "left tenth" (if there happens to be one)—just so long as it is some kind of a tenth. They also seem to think that this tenth is still theirs to be used whenever and wherever they please.

Both of these conceptions are wrong; they are diametrically opposed to the truth as found in the Holy Scriptures, and, as long as they persist, it will be impossible for the church to really accept the principle and adopt the practice of paying the Lord's tithe.

The Lord's tithe is not any portion of the income, it is the *first tenth*. That is, *it is the first portion to be deducted from the net income.* Not

written on the tablets of memory and paid sometime, if not forgotten; nor even set down in an account book, which will be squared some day. It is a first charge against the income, whether that income is from the land, flocks, herds, merchandise, salary, income from investments, or whatnot.

It is not only the first portion to be deducted from the income, *but it is the first portion to be paid out of the income.*

(2) The "limited" storehouse plan is a palpable and dangerous compromise with principle. The ten commandments are good, *but difficult*, therefore, let us organize a "limited obedience" church. Why not? If it is right to keep back a part of the money that belongs to God, why is it not just as valid to keep back a part of the obedience due to God? If one was intended "only for the Jews" (though both were equally commended by Jesus) why was not the other intended "only for the Jews" also? But if both are equally binding, why do we assume the right to reduce one in practice twenty, twenty-five, or thirty-five per cent? Is not this the very evil which Malachi thundered against: "Bring ye the WHOLE TITHE into the storehouse." He was dealing with Jews who had accepted the tithe in "principle," while shaving the practice. He wanted the whole of the Lord's tithe brought to the place where it belonged. He also called the

partial withholding of tithes robbery—pretty strong language. His resonant denunciations set our sensitive nerves a-tingle, and maybe we had better say farewell to “Brother Watkins-a” in this chapter as soon as possible! But it ought to be said that Malachi conditioned the Divine blessing upon the abandonment of the “limited” storehouse plan!

Yes, we know that the “limited” storehouse was not intended to officially rob God. It was expected that the portion reserved should care for benevolent objects not under the specific direction of the church. It was thought that tithers would pay a portion of their tithe—even the larger portion—more freely than they would pay the whole. There was no ostensible lowering of the scriptural standard, for it was presumed that the whole tithe would be used somewhere. *But it was an unwarranted and dangerous compromise.* It at once made elaborate and exact book-keeping necessary. The figuring of the percentage to be paid and retained made this unavoidable. It opened the door to wild guessing as to how much had been retained or paid. Does it require an acute psychical analyst to decide which side of the ledger would win whenever the “limited” storehouse tither got into dispute with himself concerning percentages? And then there would be the question of the expenditure of the reserved portion. Exact accounting would again be required. He would

have two accounts to balance instead of one, and two percentages to figure instead of one, and always a balance to consult before he could make a payment anywhere, and always there would be surpluses to carry or arrearages to figure. Most people would soon get gloriously mixed up. And then, if they gave up their attempt at exact book-keeping, and retained their conscience about the tithe, they would be in constant doubt as to whether they were robbing Peter to pay Paul, *or just stealing from both!* Compare those complications with the simple, scriptural, and satisfying method of bringing the whole tithe into the storehouse!

(3) It was evidently the laudable desire of the limited storehouse plan to make tithing easier, but it does, in reality, make it harder. A child cannot be taught to grow honest gradually; say 50 per cent the first ten years, 75 per cent in the next five years, then 100 per cent toward the close of the next six years. Doing right is never made easy by going two-thirds or three-fourths of the way, *and resting up before we try the rest of the journey.* The true psychological approach to the tithe is not to teach men to go two-thirds or three-fourths of the way and stop, *but to go all the way the first time.* The final goal will not be made easier by delays enroute. When your machine is sailing along in "high," with every cylinder "hitting" rhythmically, and the last inch of the

glorious mechanism throbbing with power, *why shut off the gas and clamp on the brakes just as you reach the steepest hill?* Is that a good time and place to “rest up” for the rest of the journey?! This nation long discussed the resumption of specie payment. Many schemes for approaching this end circumspectly were proposed. Finally a great man, with the artlessness of a child, said: “The way to resume specie payment is to resume.” And, gasping with astonishment at its own stupidity, the nation *resumed*. There is only one way, friend, to tithe successfully, in spite of the bad advice of the protagonists of certain “denatured” storehouse “modifications”: pay the Lord’s tithe promptly, pay it fully, and “fight it out along this line” as long as you live!

(4) The limited storehouse plan attempts an impossibility: building an organization around a vacuum. Here is the brief history of one “limited” storehouse association: At the initial meeting when the organization was perfected, and officers elected for the year, it was decided that each tither should be allowed to retain 35 per cent of his tithe for personal administration. Sixty-five per cent should be paid into the treasury, and the treasurer was authorized to divide it every month as follows: thirty-five per cent for the budget, and thirty per cent for the denominational benevolences. By that simple (*and fatal*) expedient all business had been transacted

a year in advance. A monthly meeting was attempted but found impossible. Why should there be one? The association had nothing to discuss. There was no money in the treasury to dispense. Other organizations in the church were active, virile, but this feeble infant never got out of its swaddling clothes. How could it? It was never allowed to exercise voice, limbs, *or stomach*. If it had had a contingent fund to digest there would have been some reason for a monthly meeting, and a sufficient incentive to induce the members to attend. Without that, the income soon dwindled, the interest waned, and the organization disappeared but never disbanded. Do not forget that the real administrative interest in a storehouse tithers' association *centers in the contingent fund*. It can be used for any purpose, anywhere, and its actual expenditure always causes interesting debates; every meeting brings special appeals for help from this fund, or special suggestions as to how the unexpended balance shall be employed.

(5) The limited storehouse plan has been tried out *and has failed*. The Central New York is one of the pathfinder conferences of the Methodist Episcopal church. It led the whole denomination in Centenary achievements. Under the impetus of what storehouse tithing had done for the Geneva church (it should be emphasized that this church was saved not by tithing, but by *unadulterated, Simon pure, unlimited storehouse tithing*)

the Central New York Conference got more than its quota of the desired Methodist Million Christian Stewards. When the time for the Centenary canvass came it again startled the denomination with a total subscription far in excess of its allotment. But it did not look with favor on the storehouse plan. The association in the Geneva church soon changed from the full to the limited storehouse plan, allowing its members to retain twenty-five per cent of their tithe for personal administration; Homer Avenue, Cortland, N. Y., and Canton, Penna., organized on the full storehouse plan, (there may have been others, but we have not been able to locate them) while the vast majority of the churches in the conference either did not organize their tithers at all, or turned to the limited storehouse plan.

Most of the copy for the January, 1922, issue of *The Storehouse Advocate* was written by members of the Central New York Conference Storehouse Commission, appointed at the conference session of 1921 for the purpose of organizing the whole conference on the storehouse plan.

Please bear in mind that this conference has tried out two kinds of tithing, *and has found both wanting*:

1. Unorganized, or individual administrative tithing. At the present writing, no large group of orthodox believers in the Christian world has so large a percentage of signed Christian stew-

ards as the Central New York Conference. Here, if anywhere, self-administrative tithing ought to have been successful. No conference or denomination anywhere has an abler or stabler constituency; each church had a large group of tithers; they understood fully what they had done, and why they had done it. *If self administration is God's plan for this generation*, it certainly ought to have succeeded within the bounds of this conference.

2. The limited storehouse plan. If this plan could succeed anywhere, that fact ought to have been demonstrated in the Geneva church. When this association was at the height of its usefulness it suddenly switched to the limited plan. The "limited" idea started with 150 people who were seasoned storehouse tithers. They had been paying their full tithe for several years. Surely, no limited storehouse association ever could have a more favorable beginning. It builded upon the foundation of a successful "unlimited" association.

The Storehouse Commission of the Central New York Conference, composed of the Revs. E. B. Topping, H. H. Downey, B. E. Pierce, and G. Y. Benton, held its first meeting at Geneva, N. Y., Nov. 10th, 1921. Among the resolutions passed were the following:

"Whereas, the storehouse plan of tithing is the only plan that *adequately conserves the results of*

a stewardship campaign, as is conclusively proven by many churches which have had the plan in operation for extended periods;

“And, whereas, the storehouse plan *contains the only real remedy for the financial ills of the church*, and is the surest hope of maintaining the Centenary standard when the Centenary period is past;

“And, whereas, the storehouse movement is rapidly spreading in our own and in adjacent conferences;

“Be it hereby resolved that we do earnestly recommend to the stewardship division of the Committee on Conservation and Advance this plan; and respectfully urge you to do all in your power to bring this plan to the attention of the church at large, and to incorporate it in your program for the advancement of the kingdom.”

The Rev. B. E. Pierce, the present pastor of the Geneva church, in an article on the “Stewardship Movement in the Central New York Conference,” tells of the organization of an association at Auburn, N. Y., but not on the storehouse plan, in July, 1916. He says that they refused “to even speak of the storehouse plan.” How did it end? Soon! But read what he says:

“*The lack of the storehouse plan caused the work to be temporary, and as soon as the great cause, the mortgage, was removed, the tithers,*

feeling that they had accomplished their purpose, fell apart, and the tithe was discontinued!"

Concerning the campaign for Christian Stewards in this conference, and the Centenary Campaign which immediately followed, Mr. Pierce says: "The ease with which the Centenary quota was reached was largely due to stewardship—the tithers leading the way with their increased giving. The Centenary conserved the work of the campaign. *Had it not been for this I fear the campaign would have been nearly fruitless.*" That is, this pastor who was present through it all, now feels that the campaign for unorganized Christian stewards, in a conference where a phenomenally large number were signed up, would have been "nearly fruitless" if it had not been immediately followed by the greatest denominational campaign for money in all history! What is the situation to-day among these unorganized tithers? Let us turn to the testimony of Mr. Pierce:

"We now can go into many churches where one-third of the members are signed tithers, and *fail to find that they have added one penny of increase to the budget.*"

Mr. Pierce then adds a sentence which we would like to have emblazoned above every Christian pulpit in the world: MUCH AGAINST MY WILL I HAVE BEEN COMPELLED TO FEEL THAT THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE

STEWARDSHIP EFFECTIVE IS THE STOREHOUSE PLAN!

The Rev. E. B. Topping, of Syracuse, N. Y., in an article on "After the Centenary, What?" says: "Unorganized tithing will not meet the need. We have been seeking a million tithers. But it becomes more and more apparent that if we secured them, *it would not increase the giving to our great organized benevolences in any large way. I have had the testimony of many pastors bearing out this statement. The tithe personally administered has not brought any marked increase for direct kingdom work.*"

Do not these quotations prove that individual administrative, unorganized stewardship is an *ignis fatuus* which it would *not* be well for the church to follow?

But how about the experience of the Geneva church with the limited storehouse plan? In the columns of *The Storehouse Advocate* Mr. Pierce says: "We tried the limited storehouse plan, and then, with only one dissenting vote, decided to go back to the original plan, and we are working under that plan at the present time with *greater inspiration and larger success than ever before.* We do not have to use any argument, for facts speak louder than words. We feel that not only does the storehouse covenant solve all financial problems, but it also furnishes the key for the personal evangelism that is to make this world

the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.” In a private letter Mr. Pierce says that the greatest loss incurred in the adoption of the limited storehouse plan was in the morale of the association; that it was sinking into a lethargic condition from which it was *immediately lifted by the re-adoption of the full storehouse plan*. Proving that you cannot build a cohesive, aggressive organization around a vacuum—and that is just what the always empty treasury of a limited storehouse association is.

Wide publicity has recently been given to two fantastic schemes for “modified” storehouse tithing. Since there is no suggestion that they have ever been tried out we will not animadvert upon them. We feel sure that they would wither much more quickly than did Jonah’s gourd if exposed to the blistering sun of actual experience. But they remind us of a story:

“Well,” said Smith as Jones came strutting down the street, with expanded chest and head held high, “you must feel fine this morning.”

“Why should I not,” replied Jones, “my wife just paid me a fine compliment.”

“Share it with us,” coaxed Smith, “if she could say anything good about you it ought to be given to the world.”

“Ah, when I kissed her good by, she patted me on the back and said ‘you are a model husband,’ ” boomed the happy Jones.

“That was fine, but suppose you look up the meaning of that word ‘model’ when you get to your office,” cautioned Smith:

Jones did so, much to his regret, ’tis said, for he read: “Model”—a small imitation of the real thing!

Really that is what, and that is all, all “limited” and “modified” schemes of storehouse tithing are: *very* small and *very* poor imitations of the real thing! The shame is that their “limitations” and “modifications” should be masqueraded under the name of the “storehouse.”

XI

Some Important Questions

IF the reader has not been in the habit of tithing his income, or if he has been a tither but not on the storehouse plan, we can understand how unanswered questions would spring to his lips at this point. How can anyone who believes that the weal of the church is the welfare of the world view the achievements of storehouse tithing other than wistfully? No mind unclosed by crass prejudice can fail to appreciate the evidence of modern financial miracles found in these pages; *nor be blind to the stupendous possibilities locked up in this plan when once officially adopted, fostered, and propagated by Protestant Christianity!* Nowhere on this globe can the results chronicled in these pages be paralleled. (These words are being written under the shadow of a church whose total income four years ago was \$6,432.95, and whose total income last year approximated \$25,000.00—largely traceable to the organization of a storehouse tithers' association.) These things are not written on the musty pages of history, but are the achievements of yesterday and to-day—a modern edition of the “Acts of the Apostles.”

The incredulous from anywhere (and there are many, and many who ought to know better) can visit these churches, interview these pastors, talk with these official members, and discover for themselves whether the things we have written are true. The more thorough the investigation the more emphatic will be the verdict: "The half was not told me."

No demurrer can be entered on the score of exceptional opportunities or incentives. These results have been achieved in the routine type of churches found in every American state: open country, village, town, urban, suburban, downtown, uptown, residential and industrial communities. Storehouse tithing has shown peculiar adaptability to every type of community and every kind of church in existence. *What has happened here can happen anywhere*, for this movement has not been promoted by exceptional men (far, far from it), and has not had a shred of assistance from exceptionably favorable circumstances.

Why not? People are the same everywhere; the need is the same everywhere; men and women whose hearts burn with love for the Redeemer, and who are eager for the success of His cause are to be found everywhere; what has been done in country, village, town, city, industrial and residential churches among the Baptists, Lutherans, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists

can be done in similar communities and churches throughout the world; what five thousand storehouse tithers have done in the Wyoming Conference five thousand Christians will do in any Conference, Synod, Presbytery, Convention, or Diocese when their leaders, instead of doubling their fists and squaring to fight before they know what it is all about, substitute wise and enthusiastic leadership for surreptitious rock throwing.

In closing this discussion we wish to ask a few questions :

1. Can the modern church be changed from the voluntary to the tithe basis? If the tithe is a scriptural requirement, yes; if it is not, no. Christian people do, in the last analysis, believe in the Bible. While many Christians are always keen for schemes that will enable them to avoid the serious application of scriptural truths to their lives and *purses*, *many are not*, and will walk in the pathway of life whenever it is pointed out, however steep it may seem. No one who has felt the heart-throb of the modern church, or who has caught its low moan of sorrow for the moral woes of a lost race can ever be convinced that it is impossible to bring the church into the fullest harmony with the Divine Will. History, sacred and profane, teaches that the church of to-day is nearer what it ought to be than it has ever been. This being true, all that the church ought to be and do is easily within the range of possibility.

The church only goes wrong when it is poorly or wrongly led! It has wandered into the wilderness often, but never when it was not leader led. It has stayed in the wilderness for centuries, but only because it had been shackled by poor, incompetent, or head-strong leadership. There is no organization in this world so anxious to be right and go straight as the Christian church. Let it be properly taught and efficiently led, and in one generation it will be found practicing the payment of the Lord's tithe with greater joy, efficiency, and enthusiasm than was ever known among the ancient Israelites. The Christian church is never in being, it is always in process of becoming—something that it is not and has never been! The attempt to hold it where it is, or make it what it once was, must eternally fail. It is ever going somewhere and becoming something. Where it will arrive in the next generation depends upon the pathway in which *its present leaders* will direct its footsteps. The church is not a continuous quantity but a changing body. The church must be reborn, retaught, revised every thirty-five years, *for every thirty-five years the whole church dies*. The new church is never what it wants to be, but always what the church of the previous generation determined (perhaps unconsciously) it should be! The church of to-day may not, therefore, remake itself, but the church of the next generation lies in its hands,

like shapeless clay on the potter's wheel, to be moulded into any pattern desired. Most adults show small capacity for changing their opinions, even when they are wrong; and little inclination to change their habits, even *when they are unscriptural*; and no capacity at all for adjusting their giving to their prosperity when they do not have a definite standard. But all that cannot be done with the vast majority of adults however hard we may try, can be easily done with children—if we teach them while they are children.

The Wyoming Annual Conference is keenly alive to these truths. While it is accomplishing something with the Fathers and Mothers it is *preparing the way to do greater things through their children*. It is either enrolling them into Junior Storehouse Associations or is taking them into the senior organizations. This frequently reduces the per capita income, *but it cares nothing for that*, for it is preparing the future church for larger achievements than the *present church* found possible. These children are growing up in an atmosphere where tithe paying is as natural as breathing, and as much a part of their lives as tongue, and arm, and foot. What this will mean to the church of the next generation exceeds the capacity of the finest imagination.

Adult citizens in America destroyed the licensed liquor traffic, but they were the children of yesterday, suddenly grown to manhood and woman-

hood, *who had been patiently trained to do that very thing.* Ah, those far-seeing, patiently-planning women of the W. C. T. U.,—will the world ever be allowed to forget what those initials stand for? It seems like only a few short summers ago when the author used to sing lustily, with the k—ds of that “remote” period:

“Tremble, King Alcohol, for we will grow up.”

Now, if the truth must be spoken, King Alcohol laughed instead of trembled. The writer learned that song in a room rented by the Good Templar's Lodge, directly above the largest, best furnished, and most generally patronized saloon in his home city! King Alcohol, secure on his throne, grasping the sceptre of undisputed political power, did not have any better sense than to fill the air with alcohol-laden, raucaus laughter when he heard those piping trebles. Had his brain not been befuddled he would have recognized that refrain as his funeral dirge. *Those children have grown up, and John Barleycorn, hoary with age and crime, has been tried, condemned, executed, and in an unmarked grave his filthy carcass lies buried forever from human sight!*

Let the church of to-day, while not neglecting the re-education of its adult membership, fix its attention on the thorough indoctrination of its youth, and the next generation will be a tithing church.

2. But can a fair proportion of the membership of the present church be brought to adopt the plan of storehouse tithing? In answering this question we are not left to uncertain speculation. We can speak, as we do on every page of this book, from recent and even current experiences. The writer is the superintendent of a district of fifty churches. It is almost entirely rural, with one city of eleven thousand, another of five thousand, and a third of three thousand inhabitants, while the remainder is composed of towns, villages, and open country. It is that kind of territory recognized the nation over as conservative; conservative outside, inside, and from head to foot. When the modern stewardship revival came rolling in with the Methodist Centenary these churches knew no more about it, and had no more interest in it than did the man in the moon. Nor did they care much, to tell the truth, about the larger programs of the church. They had always jogged along at their own pace, doing much as they pleased about quotas and extra pleas, and ever expected to do about as they had done. But Stewardship in the Wyoming Conference, with the examples of Waverly and Sayre, could only mean one thing—storehouse stewardship. But the idea of attempting to introduce *that kind* of stewardship on *this kind* of a district was positively repellant. But the initiative of the Binghamton District set the pace for the confer-

ence, and it had to be given a trial. The eagerness with which the idea was seized by enthusiastic groups in the villages and towns was a revelation. Those who had never been expected, under any circumstances, to accept any kind of tithing, swallowed storehouse tithing without a single grimace and with a gulp of satisfaction—hook, bait, and sinker! Everybody did not do this—would that they had. But enough did it, so that now we have just as many storehouse associations as we have charges. Since forty charges on this district have from two to three preaching places it will be seen that there is still much ground to be possessed. About one-third of the supporting membership of these fifty storehouse churches is found in the membership of these associations. But the significant fact is that whenever a church begins to take its task seriously, or wishes to put on an advance program it turns as instinctively toward the storehouse plan as a duck takes to water. They all realize that the solution of their financial difficulties lies there. That has been the most significant development to date. This fact was soon apparent:

That in every church, large or small, wherever located, there was sure to be found a group of people who were willing to accept the principle and undertake the practice of the tithe. When they saw that this plan would lead the church out of its perpetual financial depression, and open the

way for larger service, they wanted to begin at once. Church leaders generally fail to appreciate the nature of the devotion lurking in the hearts of an inner circle of believers in every local unit of the universal church. The stability and growth of the kingdom is the supreme concern of their lives. Once show them that God has opened a way out of the calamitous financial difficulties of modern Christianity, and *enough of them will adopt it at once* to lift the church to unbelievable heights of influence and power.

Not many great adventures for Jesus Christ are being carried on in any part of the world. Few Christians are called to give their lives for the truth, and fewer yet to risk fame and fortune for the cross. The church is in danger of growing corpulent and cautious. An American Indian went through life stigmatized by the name: Young Man Afraid of His Horse. Has the church of the Risen Christ grown *afraid of its constituency*? It could suffer no greater calamity. Has it come to the evil day when it believes that strength lies in compromise, and when it must ask little and require nothing?

We do not believe it. There was never a time when Jesus Christ was more ardently loved, or when men and women were ready to adventure more for the welfare of His church. Let the leaders call God's greater Israel forward to God's perfect plan for financing

His church and the response will exceed the highest hopes.

3. Can the modern Christian, with the many demands upon his income, afford to pay the Lord's tithe? In a conversation with a friend about this matter, he turned suddenly, and with deep emotion said: "The heart of this matter is not 'does the Lord demand it,' but 'can I afford it'?"

Instantly there rose before the mind of the writer the memory of that night when, walking home from an evangelistic meeting, he turned over in his mind the question of becoming a disciple of Him who said, "follow Me." But just what did becoming a Christian involve? Ah, yes, the *ten commandments*. No, he could not keep *them*. They were too high, too uncompromising; besides, he was not quite sure that *he wanted to keep them*. There was the world to enjoy. Life's sun was just rising, and there was much to see, and hear, and *taste*. But then, if God was God as he believed He was; and if God had pointed out the way in which His human children were to walk, as he thought He had, why, it was "up to" man to at least try. Looking up into the clear dome of a star-studded winter's night, he said: "Well, God, I guess I'll try." And then, with a catch in his voice, added: "I guess I'll make a poor fist of it. But since You insist, I'll try."

And that is all that life is for any of us: trying to do what God wants us to do because we are trying to be what God wants us to be.

It is a serious mistake to approach any of the Divine requirements on the assumption of our incapacity. It is not natural disability but cultivated disinclination that prevents obedience to God's laws.

It is so easy for man to say: "God's requirements are too stiff; they move on too high a plane; concessions should be made at critical points, and there should be provisions for exceptional cases." But God is engaged in the great task of levelling up the standard of human conduct, *not levelling down a perfect law to fit self-stunted capacities*. By this time man ought to know that he can never fix his own moral standards, *for he always gets them too low*. And experience should have taught him long ago that *God never gets them too high*.

Can the modern Christian afford to pay the Lord's tithe? Most certainly. If he has financial obligations that the ancient Jew or the early Christian knew nothing about, *he also has an income such as these forbears knew less about*.

Christians who spend hundreds of millions of dollars in needless and dangerous luxuries—upon dress, vacations, automobiles, theatres (all kinds), needlessly expensive foods, chewing gum, cosmetics, and in ways too numerous to mention,

should not refuse to try to pay the Lord's tithe until they have made an honest effort to do it! If superfluities must be cut off, it will prove a real blessing. If the payment of the Lord's tithe looks hard, *and proves hard*, it yet ought to be attempted. Life grows rich in experience and high in moral achievement not by always doing the things that are easy, but by leaving the lowlands for the heights even though the way is rugged, steep, dangerous.

The author has canvassed church after church for storehouse tithers, meeting people in their homes, stores, shops, fields, and on the highway, urging them to try the Lord's plan of supporting His church for one year. Refusals and acceptances have been about equal. Several have refused because they confessed that their tithe would pay the whole budget of the church; others because they thought it a good thing to keep the church poor, and make it "hustle" for a living. *It is now recalled that only one among the hundreds interviewed asserted that he could not afford to pay the tithe, and he was a teacher in a high school, married but without children, and getting a salary of \$3,000.00 per year!*

It was noticed that every rejection was preceded by an apparent mental calculation as to how much more the tithe would mean than the individual had been paying. It was not, seemingly, a question of obligation, or of ability, nor

yet the tragedy of an always empty treasury which the Lord wanted filled, *but whether* he was willing to have that much of *his* worldly goods go to the support of the kingdom of God!

As long as Christian men and women maintain that attitude of easy rejection toward one of the plainest requirements of the written word, Christianity will go limping and whining down the centuries.

But no doubt many refusals to even attempt to pay the Lord's tithe, are based upon the secret (and probably sincere) fear that it cannot be done.

There is not a shred of evidence to suggest or substantiate such an attitude. Between four and five thousand people in the small territory of the Wyoming Conference have been paying the Lord's tithe for one, two, three, four and even five years. In Wesley Chapel, Ohio, there are Christians who have been doing it for a quarter of a century; in Geneva and Cortland, N. Y., in Canton, Pa., and now in numerous Baptist churches there are from two to three thousand additional storehouse tithers who have been paying the Lord's tithe from one, two, six months to six years. *We do not know and have not heard of one individual who has stopped paying the Lord's tithe because he could not afford it; nor one who has been financially straightened by doing it; nor yet one who has had to curtail his expenditures in any direction to do it.*

On the other hand, hundreds have testified in public and in private, that it has brought incalculable blessings into their lives, such as moral stability, spiritual development, and the *enlargement of their financial resources*.

No one can say: "These people would find it hard if they actually paid the tithe," for statistics prove that they have paid it. All the inner financial facts in connection with these associations have been dragged into the light and published to the world. Here it was said in the beginning: If we are going to say that we are going to do it, let us do it; and if we are going to do it let us know whether we are doing it; and if we are doing it, let us let the world know that we are doing it. *We have done it, and the world knows that it has been done.* These statistics have been critically examined by many who did not accept the plan of storehouse tithing, but not one hint has come that they were not proof of the theses that storehouse tithers did tithe. Whether Baptists, Lutherans, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, or Methodists, the evidence is conclusive that storehouse *tithers tithe*—not because they say they do but because the money they pay into the storehouse proves it!

If seven thousand storehouse tithers tithe without personal or domestic embarrassment, and with every evidence that it is a joy and not a burden, why cannot seventy thousand, or seven hundred thousand, or seven million Christians do the

same? They can if they will. The real impediment is not disability but disinclination.

4. Is storehouse tithing taught in the Bible? This is a fair question, and of supreme importance. It has been asked by many. It will be asked by many more anxious to know the mind of the Spirit.

Like most questions it cannot be answered by a peremptory "yes" or a curt "no." For instance:

In what part of the Bible do you find the modern Sunday school specifically authorized. Come, now, not elaborate justifications for the Sunday school, or logical deductions that make it permissible, but specific references to the establishment and conduct of what we know as the Sunday school. You do not find the word in your concordance, but you do not have a large one, if No, friend, if you had one as big as a barn door you would not find it. The Sunday school that you know was as unknown to the writers of the Bible as wireless telegraphy or the hook worm. But that fact does not leave the Sunday school without scriptural warrant.

And those splendid organizations, the Woman's Foreign and Home Missionary Societies, will you tell us where their names are mentioned in Scripture, or their activities authorized? O, we know about the millions of money they have raised, the missions they have established, the

homes and hospitals in which they have gathered the orphaned, the sick, and the dying, but all of that is evading the question. Just where does the Bible say that *these* women shall do these things?

There is also the Ladies' Aid Society—that fine body of women upon whose overweighted shoulders so large a burden has been laid, the testament, book, chapter, and verse, please? And we think this time you ought to be confined to the New Testament. The earlier portions of the Old Testament are very old, you know, and there is a growing feeling that they ought not be quoted overmuch. Just stay on the hither side of Malachi this time. Now find those numerous references to this modern maid of all work. O, look again, surely there must have been a Ladies' Aid Society in the First Church, Jerusalem. (Just telegraph us, charges reversed, when you find these references.)

Do you not see how this method, apparently legitimate, would exclude as unbiblical every *modus operandi* in the church of to-day?

If storehouse tithing is to be dismissed because the Apostles did not organize an association in Jerusalem, Antioch, or Athens, then the multitude of organizations through which the church of to-day functions *are unscriptural, and should be abandoned*.

To all of this it is sufficient to answer: The Bible is a book of principles, not policies. God

sets our faces in the right direction, puts enough guide posts along the road, *and then leaves the rest to us*. God is always more interested in results than in modes. THE METHOD THAT WILL DO QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY THE THING THAT GOD WANTS DONE IS ALWAYS BIBLICAL. And is it not just as true that all methods which stop short of accomplishing the will of God *are unbiblical*? Measured by this standard the storehouse plan is undoubtedly scriptural.

Again, have you ever thought of applying this scriptural test to the variagated modes by which the church of to-day is financed?

You have patronized many church dinners, suppers, fairs, festivals. The profits, whether large or small, went to support your pastor, organist, choir, janitor, heat and repair your church building. Did you ever find any Biblical command, or permission, or example for these things? If we are now going to exclude all methods of financing the kingdom not mentioned by name, or justified by Apostolic practice, *will not all such have to go*?

Only a decade ago probably half the churches in America rented their pews, and many do it yet. That plan always favored the rich. Did you ever find any scripture to justify it? In spirit and practice it ran counter to the genius of Christianity. It was abandoned because it was inefficient, not because it was unscriptural.

The evidence is as clear as sunlight that the Apostle Paul had no such thought in mind as financing the universal kingdom of Jesus Christ when he gave the Corinthians wise directions concerning a benevolent collection. This plan cannot accomplish what it was never intended to do. It is like trying to make a five ton locomotive built to pull a twenty ton load over a five per cent grade do the work of a two hundred ton locomotive built to pull a thousand ton load over a thirty per cent grade! First Corinthians, sixteen-two can easily pull the load to which it was originally coupled, but it has never been much more than able to start the overwhelming tonnage to which it has been illegally hitched, while it stands puffing and wheezing helplessly before the slightest suggestion of a grade. Then the clam chowder special is hurried to the front, and the oyster supper pusher is rushed to the rear, while the Ladies' Aid Society is urged to bring up its numerous auxiliary ranges, ovens, and boilers, and then, after the load has been bisected once, divided twice, the reduced tonnage finally just makes the lowest grade! Is *that* God's chosen method for financing a Divine institution? We cannot believe it.

O yes, the collection plates, those chance collectors of odds and ends, and suggestive of mute palms asking alms, are they of apostolic origin or authority? Are they specifically commanded

anywhere in the Bible. Permissible, yes; but authoritative, no!

Not one of these methods can be traced back to Prophetic or Apostolic practice. No man has authority for pointing to any one of them and saying: "This is God's chosen way for financing His kingdom." We do not object to them simply because they have no special warrant in scripture, but because they are not only *extra-scriptural* but *extraordinarily deficient*. Instead of having the merit of success they are *weighted down with the demerit of perpetual failure*.

Having rejected God's plan for financing His work the church had an insoluble problem on its hands, *and has it yet*, and there can be no change for the better so long as it persists in experimenting with substitutes.

In what sense is storehouse tithing warranted by the Bible?

You will search the scriptures in vain for the storehouse covenant printed in this book, and we nowhere intimate that Malachi had a modern storehouse tithers' association in mind when he said: "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse."

Nevertheless, we do not believe that there is clearer scriptural warrant for any of the activities of the Christian church, *than there is for the storehouse plan of tithing!*

Or, to phrase it differently:

No organization in the Christian church is

more efficiently carrying out the *direct commands and plain implications of scripture from Genesis to Revelation than is the storehouse plan of tithing!*

The proof?

1. Just as soon as God had an organized church to support He decreed that it should be done, not by subscriptions, suppers, festivals and collections, but by the payment of the tithe: "And all the tithe of the land, whether the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, *is the Lord's*, it is holy unto the Lord." Leviticus xxvii, 30.

The storehouse covenant says: "In loving loyalty to our Lord, and as an acknowledgment of His ownership, *we covenant to pay the tithe of our income.*"

What God definitely demands in Leviticus, B. C. 1500 (or thereabouts) *storehouse tithing definitely agrees to do in A. D. 1922.*

2. God not only provided that tithes should be paid, *but He designated a place where they were to be paid*: "Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there; *thither shall ye bring you all that I command you*; your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, *your tithes* and the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord." Deuteronomy xii, 11. The 23d verse of this same chapter reads: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do

it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."

The storehouse covenant says: "We do covenant with ourselves and with our God that we will bring the Lord's portion, *the full tenth into the storehouse.*"

What God definitely commands in Deuteronomy, *storehouse tithing definitely agrees to do in this year of grace 1922.*

3. The prophet Malachi urges the people to "bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, (the church) that there may be meat in mine house." Malachi iii, 10.

God had long claimed the whole tithe belonged to Him, and Malachi wanted the whole tithe, the undivided tithe, without any portion reserved for personal administration, brought into the storehouse.

What God told the people to do through the mouth of Malachi, *storehouse tithing definitely gives its solemn pledge to Almighty God that it will do.*

What God wanted "the whole tithe" to accomplish: "that there may be meat in mine house," *storehouse tithing definitely does.*

If this trinity of truths does not establish the scripturalness of storehouse tithing then is sense nonsense and language without meaning!

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